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ABSTRACT

Articles in this yearbook cover a variety of topics in the field of language arts instruction, such as applying recent metacognition theory in reading instruction; using of journals, videotapes, and humor in the classroom; training reading teachers; and improving students' speaking and listening skills. Articles and their authors are as follows: (1) "Dialogue Journals in Elementary Methods Courses" (K. E. Danielson and K. H. Wendelin); (2) "Achieving a Purpose for Reading: The Metacognitive Strategies of Reading Methods Students" (M. F. Heller); (3) "Preparing Reading Teachers to Use Research in Teaching" (T. R. Schnell); (4) "The Language Arts Classroom and Early Practicum Experience--Learning Techniques and Screening Devices" (D. Cunningham, P. McClurg, and L. Zorko); (5) "Using Videotaped Remedial Reading Instruction to Improve Teaching" (W. Ramsey and D. Rocchio); (6) "Building Listening Comprehension: Models for Use with Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers" (B. Sperling and D. Padron); (7) "Secondary Teachers' Awareness of Reading Skills" (B. A. Lloyd); (8) "Darwin Discovers the Teacher of Writing" (R. Wilborn); (9) "What's So Funny? Utilizing Characteristics of Humor to Teach Critical Reading Skills" (J. E. Parks); and (10) "The Language of Children's Oral and Written Stories" (M. Ice). (SKC)

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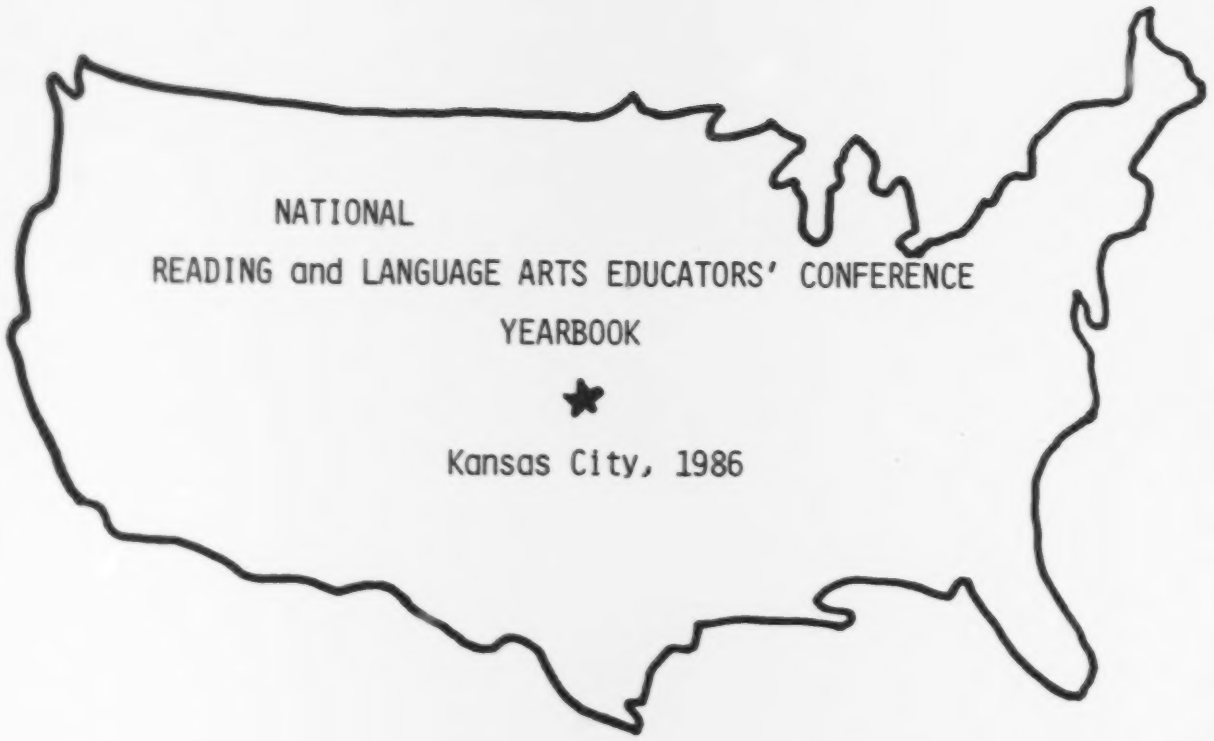

NATIONAL READING and LANGUAGE ARTS EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE YEARBOOK

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Kansas City, 1986

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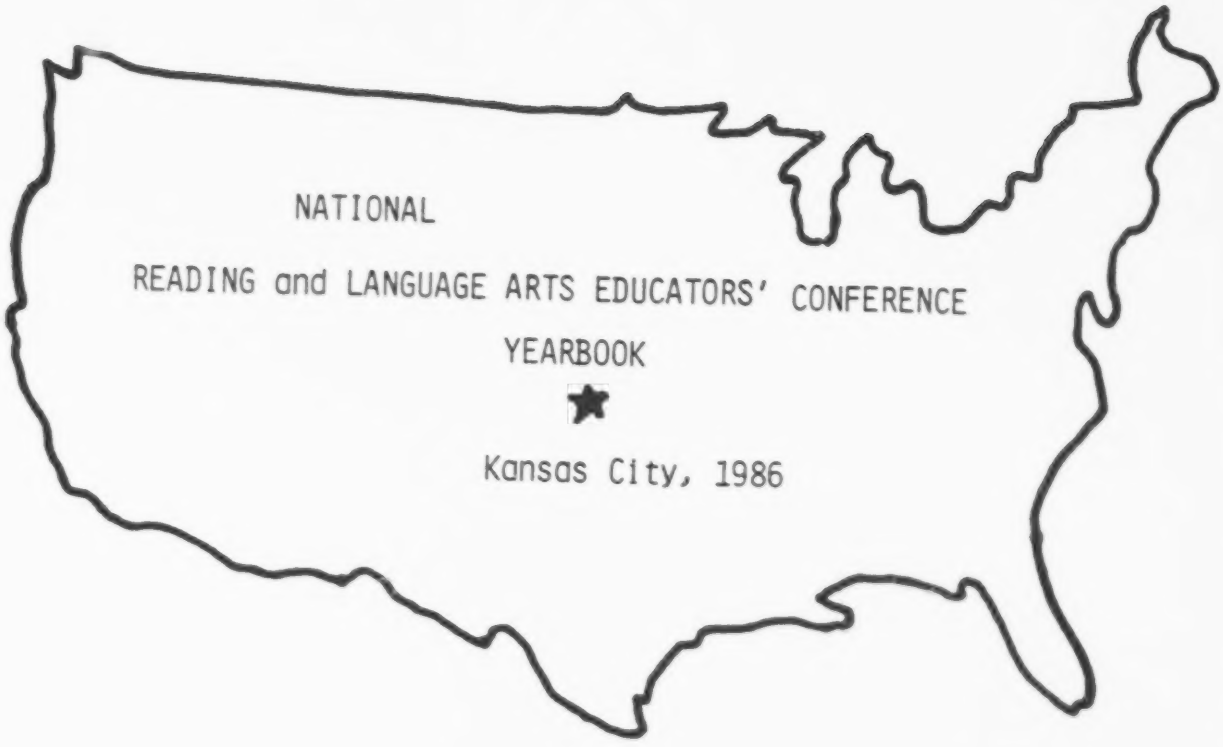

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DIALOGUE JOURNALS IN ELEMENTARY METHODS COURSES

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The dialogue journal has been proposed as a means for providing functional experiences with both reading and writing (Gambrell, 1985). In dialogue journal activity, students and teachers "converse" in writing. Teachers respond to individual student's journal entries by posing questions, making observations, sharing information, and the like, thus establishing a base of personal communication.

Although the dialogue journal has been used in elementary settings (Fulwiler, 1985; Gambrell, 1985; Hipple, 1985; Palmer & Coon, 1984) and with high school students (Youngblood, 1985), its use with college students has varied. MacKenzie (1985) asked students to react to their reading by writing about personal experiences that were linked to the content of the text. She believed that students felt more comfortable writing their reactions than discussing them orally in groups. She found that the journal writing encouraged deeper processing and a different level of involvement with text. Collins (1985) journaled daily with probationary freshmen English students. She found that they progressively learned to think as writers and readers as they generated text and made meaning from it. Leahy (1985) used students' responses in dialogue journals as the sole criteria for grading in his English classes. He found that he was able to see misconceptions of the students as well as their perceptions of the course content. His students acquired a clearer sense of writer's style and voice. Combs (1986) charted the growth of preservice teachers throughout the course of a semester as they progressed from lower levels of thinking, in which they restated content of lectures and readings and recounted classroom observations, to levels of self analysis. She felt the dialogue journals were effective, especially with regard to the students' emerging images of themselves as teachers.

Method of Study

The purpose of the study was to determine if the increased writing and opportunity for interaction created by the use of dialogue journals influenced preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs about reading and writing and the relationship between the two. Attitudes and beliefs were surveyed by a questionnaire that used a Likert-type scale developed by the researchers. More specifically, participants in the study were asked about their perceptions of themselves as readers and writers, classroom teachers' behaviors with regard to writing, and basic philosophy of reading and writing instruction. (See Tables 1 and 2 and 3 for complete listing of survey items.) Students also responded to an open-ended item in which they were asked to compare the relative importance of reading and writing as lifelong skills.

Subjects included 176 undergraduate elementary education majors at a large midwestern university enrolled in methods classes in reading, language arts, and children's literature. All three courses are taken independently of each other. In the reading course, 43 students participated in the dialogue journaling. A control group of 20 students completed the pre and post survey only. Fifteen students from the language arts course and twenty-nine students enrolled in children's literature took part in dialogue journaling. Control groups comprised of 42 and 27 students, respectively, completed pre and post questionnaires. Dialogue journals were collected every two weeks throughout an entire semester. The course instructor responded to the students' entries and returned journals at the next class period. The dialogue journal groups and control groups in reading and language arts utilized the same course syllabus and were taught by the same instructor in each area. The dialogue journal and control groups in children's literature were taught by different instructors who used syllabi that were very similar in content. The writing experiences of the control group, however, were limited. Research surveys were administered during the second class period of the semester and again during the last class period. The reading and language arts classes received the same questionnaire. The survey administered to the children's literature classes was similar, but items were rephrased to reflect the nature of the course.

Results

Mean ratings were calculated for each item on the survey for dialogue journal and control groups in all three areas. Mean ratings on items at the start of the semester were compared with end of semester ratings.

Results from the reading methods classes are reported in Table 1. Although both the experimental and control groups showed change over time in the desired direction on most items, some areas merit specific discussion particularly as they relate to the dialogue journal experience. Compared to the control group, the extended writing experience of the dialogue journal group did not appear to appreciably alter their perceptions of themselves as writers, as evidenced by their response to item 1. However, on items 3 and 5 that deal with feelings about writing, the dialogue journal group indicated dramatic changes compared to the control group whose post-survey responses were in a negative direction. The dialogue journal group showed greater positive response to items that dealt with the importance of increased writing by students and teachers (7, 11, 14, 15) compared to the control group. As expected, the experimental group showed greater post-survey agreement with the two items relating to the use of a dialogue journal in the classroom (12 and

Table 1

Mean Ratings of Pre and Post Survey Items Among Experimental and Control Groups in Reading Methods Courses

	Dialogue Journal Group		Control Group	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1. I feel that I am a good writer.	3.93	4.05	3.80	3.95
2. I feel that I am a good reader.	4.07	4.21	4.20	4.25
3. Writing is therapeutic for me.	3.61	4.02	3.30	3.75
4. My spelling could be improved through more writing.	3.70	4.05	3.25	3.50
5. I become nervous when an instructor reads what I have written.	3.23	2.91	2.95	3.05
6. I like to write about myself and my own feelings.	3.91	4.01	3.90	3.95
7. When I am a teacher I plan to have my students write a great deal.	3.91	4.54	4.05	4.25
8. Written communication between students and teachers is important.	4.30	4.61	4.05	4.30
9. My writing could be improved through more reading.	4.09	4.37	4.05	4.00
10. My reading could be improved through more writing.	3.58	4.12	3.30	3.60
11. Students should see their teachers writing their own stories, poems, etc.	4.26	4.63	4.15	4.40
12. Dialogue journals (a student writes an entry and the teacher responds to that entry in writing) establish a rapport between students and their teachers.	4.37	4.84	4.30	4.50
13. I would feel comfortable using dialogue journals in my own classroom.	4.26	4.81	3.95	4.35
14. In order to teach writing effectively, a teacher should do a lot of writing him/herself.	4.19	4.63	4.05	4.15
15. The more you write, the better you write.	4.02	4.09	3.90	3.95
16. Writing, reading and spelling should be taught separately from one another.	2.70	1.91	2.30	1.65
17. Reading and writing are similar processes.	3.56	4.23	3.25	3.65

13) than did the control group. In addition, the dialogue journal group appeared to have a greater sense of the relationship between reading and writing, as evidenced by their post-survey responses to items 9, 10, and 17. On the open-ended question, both the experimental and the control group responded that reading and writing are equally important as lifelong skills. Comments from subjects in both groups stressed the role of writing as a means of communication, pointed out that both are needed to survive in society, and discussed the interrelated nature of reading and writing. One student wrote, "In writing, we use knowledge gained from reading to express our own opinions."

As shown in Table 2, the pre and post ratings of survey items by language arts experimental and control groups did not occur as expected. Among the experimental group subjects, the experience of the dialogue journal appeared to have some impact on feelings associated with writing, as evidenced by their responses to items 3, 5, and 6. In those areas of the survey in which it was expected that the dialogue journal would have an influence over time--the interrelated nature of reading and writing, the use of the journal in a classroom setting--the control group showed greater change than the experimental group. One possible explanation might be that both the experimental and control groups in language arts had considerable exposure to the writing process and to varied classroom writing activities. Such concentrated attention in class might have offset any possible effects of the dialogue journal. Responses to the open-ended item were similar in both groups. Subjects viewed both reading and writing as important for communication purposes, as necessary to function in society, and as dependent upon each other. Language arts students discussed an additional function of writing that was only briefly mentioned by the reading and literature groups. They commented that writing is a means of self expression and can serve as an avenue of escape and relaxation.

Table 2

Mean Ratings of Pre and Post Survey Items Among Experimental and Control Groups in Language Arts Methods Courses

	Dialogue Journal Group		Control Group	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1. I feel that I am a good writer.	3.53	3.80	3.79	4.00
2. I feel that I am a good reader.	3.87	4.20	4.14	4.26
3. Writing is therapeutic for me.	3.00	4.13	3.15	3.55
4. My spelling could be improved through more writing.	3.80	4.40	3.62	4.14
5. I become nervous when an instructor reads what I have written.	3.27	2.93	3.33	3.24
6. I like to write about myself and my own feelings.	3.53	4.00	3.76	3.98
7. When I am teacher I plan to have my students write a great deal.	3.60	4.53	4.07	4.48
8. Written communication between students and teachers is important.	4.20	4.73	4.17	4.42
9. My writing could be improved through more reading.	4.13	4.53	3.93	4.41
10. My reading could be improved through more writing.	3.53	3.80	3.38	3.93
11. Students should see their teachers writing their own stories, poems, etc.	3.67	4.67	3.76	4.42
12. Dialogue journals (a student writes an entry and the teacher responds to that entry in writing) establish a rapport between students and their teachers.	4.27	4.73	4.02	4.67
13. I would feel comfortable using dialogue journals in my own classroom.	4.27	4.73	3.93	4.49
14. In order to teach writing effectively, a teacher should do a lot of writing him/herself.	3.93	5.13	4.14	4.57
15. The more you write, the better you write.	4.00	4.40	4.26	4.41
16. Writing, reading and spelling should be taught separately from one another.	2.47	1.60	2.26	1.70
17. Reading and writing are similar processes.	3.73	3.80	3.50	4.02

In the children's literature classes, there were considerable differences between the experimental and control groups in the comparison of their pre and post ratings of the survey items. (See Table 3). The extended writing experiences of the dialogue journal group appeared to have a strong influence on their feelings about writing as a means of personal expression, as shown by items 5 and 6. The experimental subjects were encouraged to use the journal as a vehicle for response to the literature they were reading. Apparently, they did indeed view the journal as a means of expressing feelings. This also might account for the differences between the two groups on item 17, in that the journal group was encouraged to write analytically about their reading. The dialogue journal group appeared to have a greater realization of the interrelated nature of reading and writing, as shown by their responses to items 10, 11, 12 and 18. As expected, the experimental group responded favorably to the potential of the

dialogue journal as a means of communication between students and teachers in the classroom (see items 9, 14, 15). Like the reading and language arts classes in their responses to the open-ended question, the students in children's literature regarded reading and writing as fairly equal in importance as lifelong skills.

Table 1

Mean Ratings of Pre and Post Survey Items Among Experimental and Control Groups in Children's Literature Courses

	Dialogue Journal Group		Control Group	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1. I feel that I am a good writer.	3.72	3.78	3.50	3.95
2. I feel that I am a good reader.	3.97	4.10	4.22	4.22
3. I enjoy reading as a recreational activity.	4.00	4.21	4.44	4.55
4. Reading is therapeutic for me.	3.72	4.03	3.94	4.00
5. Writing is therapeutic for me.	3.14	3.69	3.50	3.19
6. I like to write about myself and my own feelings.	3.72	4.03	3.33	3.56
7. I like to read about people like me.	4.17	4.35	4.11	4.15
8. When I am a teacher I plan to have my students read for pleasure a great deal.	4.41	4.69	4.44	4.63
9. Written communication between students and teachers is important.	4.31	4.69	4.33	4.33
10. My writing could be improved through more reading.	4.24	4.45	4.22	4.03
11. My reading could be improved through more writing.	3.72	4.00	3.83	3.96
12. Reading stimulates writing.	4.03	4.45	3.94	4.04
13. Students should see their teachers reading stories, poems, etc.	4.48	4.76	4.44	4.37
14. Dialogue journals (a student writes an entry and the teacher responds to that entry in writing) establish a rapport between students and their teachers.	4.17	4.59	4.15	3.93
15. I would feel comfortable using dialogue journals in my own classroom.	3.97	4.62	3.94	3.74
16. The more you write, the better you write.	4.55	4.52	4.48	4.44
17. The more you read, the more analytically you read.	4.10	4.31	4.19	4.15
18. Reading and writing are similar processes.	3.86	4.28	3.82	3.74

Discussion

Perhaps even more interesting than the subjects' responses to the questionnaire items were the affective results of the use of dialogue journals. Journal topics covered many areas. Students reflected on content presented in class lectures, including their opinions, questions concerning the material, and synthesis of ideas presented. Students typically asked numerous questions, not only about the subject area but about teaching in general. This was particularly true of the reading classes, who were student teaching the following semester. Students related lecture content to their experiences with children, by providing examples in their dialogue journals of issues discussed in class. Students included remembrances of their own early experiences in relation to the class content, such as being read to as a child and favorable or unfavorable classroom activities and experiences. Dialogue journal entries generally lengthened as the semester progressed and showed evidence of increasingly higher level thinking on the part of the students.

Outcomes of the dialogue journal process appeared to be positive for both the students and the instructors involved. For the methods course instructors, the journal provided an additional avenue for teaching. We had opportunities to answer questions that very likely would not have been asked in a class situation. We were also able to elaborate on topics or issues that had been presented in class to a greater degree than might have otherwise been possible. We had the opportunity to become better acquainted with students on a more personal level through regular communication. Students had similar feelings about the journal experience. As shown in excerpts below from some final entries, students approved of the dialogue journal process and recognized its potential as part of the classroom writing program.

"I think it was a good idea because it was the only 'personal' means of communication we had with one another. I plan to use dialogue journals in my own classroom because I feel it breaks down the barrier often found between students and teachers. I know it helped me get to know you a little better."

"Thanks for writing to me. I really like this idea. Your writing helps me understand things a little better."

"At the beginning of the semester, I thought it would be pain trying to come up with ideas to write about. I realize now what a benefit they are. It has given me a chance to express my personal experiences and attitudes. I have always preferred to write than to speak in class. It has also given me a chance to receive feedback which I thoroughly enjoy. It is nice getting other people's opinions."

One student started a dialogue journal with her kindergarten daughter and explored her own experiences with initiating the activity in her journal entries. Another student sent one of his journal entries as a "Letter to the Editor" to the local newspaper and it was published.

There are numerous opportunities for use of the dialogue journal in undergraduate teacher education. Other formats, such as student partners journaling with each other, might be explored. As we discovered in this study, a survey is perhaps not the most appropriate means of assessing change in attitudes and beliefs about writing and reading. Teacher education classes need to place more emphasis on actual writing experience. To understand the writing process more fully, preservice teachers need to be given opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. As their perceptions of writing develop, so too will their ability to "teach" writing. Professors need to join in the process of writing as well, so that students see writing as a universal process of making meaning.

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ACHIEVING A PURPOSE FOR READING: THE METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES OF READING METHODS STUDENTS

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The classroom teacher asks a familiar question: "What is the main idea of our reading assignment?" The students respond in a variety of ways, searching their memory for ideas about the selection, ideas that can somehow be brought together in the form of a generalization about the topic or story. The answer is conveyed either orally or in writing, and the teacher evaluates the quality of the response. "Yes, that is the main point that the author is trying to make," or "No, that's not exactly what the author had in mind." The criteria for correctness of response usually come from either a basal or literature text teacher's manual or from the teacher's own notion of the underlying message. Once determined, discussion of the main idea possibly ceases or evolves into a broader discussion of issues surrounding the main point relative to factors beyond the reading lesson--i.e., "How does the main idea relate to our own daily lives."

"How did you determine the main idea" is a question less often asked. The metacognitive nature of the question requires the student to articulate what he/she was thinking while reading and after reading--to describe his/her comprehension monitoring strategies (Flavell, 1976). The task of explaining what one knows and does not know about any subject or process cannot be taken for granted, however. Realistically we cannot expect elementary or even secondary students to have all the vocabulary necessary to tell us about their thinking skills. What they may tell us is, "I just knew the answer," or "I don't know how I came up with the main idea. I just wrote it down."

And then there's the undergraduate reading methods student, struggling to understand concepts such as metacognition and main idea, all for the purpose of knowing how to teach children to read. What is the best way to introduce them to theoretical issues that have definite practical value?

Recent theoretical and applied research into metacognition has provided important pedagogical implications for improving reading comprehension skills, specifically through comprehension monitoring strategies. A promising breakthrough in reading comprehension methodology involves asking students how they came to know what they know and then directly teaching them comprehension monitoring strategies through teacher modeling techniques (Heller, 1986; Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Thus, an effective way to teach the concept of metacognition to college juniors and seniors is to involve them in a comprehension monitoring activity.

In this paper, I will describe the results of a study in which 50 undergraduate reading methods students learned about and demonstrated the strategies that they used to construct the main idea of E. B. White's personal essay, "Education." Basic to the lesson described here is the idea that teacher modeling and concrete example-giving are important at all levels of instruction, kindergarten through university senior.

This study was undertaken with the following research questions in mind: (1) Are university reading methods students able to articulate the strategies they use to help them recognize and express (in writing) the main idea of an expository essay? (2) What are these strategies? (3) What is the relationship between the students' comprehension monitoring strategies and the quality of their expressed main ideas?

Method and Procedure

Fifty undergraduate elementary education majors enrolled in two sections of a reading methods course participated in the study. None of the 48 women and two men had previously been introduced to metacognitive theory or the concept of comprehension monitoring.

As part of their introduction to metacognitive theory, the students participated in an in-class, nongraded activity designed to illustrate the concept of comprehension monitoring. The activity began with 15 minutes of pre-reading time devoted to activating the students' prior knowledge of the topic: public schooling versus private schooling. The instructor asked the class to discuss everything they already knew or thought about the differences between public and private schooling. Ideas were written on the chalkboard without instructor comment. Following the discussion, the students were instructed to read E. B. White's (1983) essay, "Education," for the following purposes: (1) recognizing and ultimately writing the main idea (or thesis) of the essay, and (2) describing the comprehension monitoring strategies they used while constructing the main idea.

After reading the essay, each student completed response sheet A which contained the following research questions:

1. State the main idea or thesis of E. B. White's essay, "Education."

2. As you read the essay, what sorts of things were you thinking about in relation to the stated purpose for reading: Read E. B. White's essay, "Education," and then write the main idea or thesis of the essay. In other words, what strategies did you use <u>while reading</u> to determine the main idea of the essay?

Upon completion of response sheet A, each student then completed response sheet B which contained a multiple-choice main idea question and a checklist of comprehension monitoring strategies. The whole demonstration lesson, including pre-reading, reading, and writing activities, took place during a single 50-minute class period.

Results and Discussion

Three groups of students emerged in this study, based upon analysis of main idea multiple-choice responses (Table 1). I will discuss each group separately, in conjunction with their written protocols and the checklist of comprehension monitoring strategies.

Table 1

Responses to Multiple-Choice Main Idea Question

The thesis or main idea of E. B. White's essay, "Education," is the following:	N = 50
1. Public country schools are better for children than private city schools.	10 (20%)[a]
2. Private city schools are better for children than public country schools.	5 (10%)[b]
3. There is no real difference between public and private schools.	35 (70%)[c]
4. Time goes by faster in public schools.	--
5. The country is a better place to live than the city.	--

[a]Group A. [b]Group B. [c]Group C.

Group A was made up of 10 students who not only answered the main idea question correctly but also wrote correct responses to the short answer main idea question (see Figure 1 for example responses). The criteria for the correct answer were determined by two authorities: (1) the instructor's manual which accompanied the Little Brown Reader from which White's (1983) essay was taken; and (2) two independent readers, both of whom were university English professors. The agreed upon main idea/thesis of E. B. White's essay was, "Public country schools are better for children than private city schools."

Group A students named a wide variety of strategies used while reading the essay, as did all other students in the study (see Figure 2 for example responses). However, Group A students were the only ones who mentioned the essay's tone, author bias/attitude, and noticing irony as useful in determining the main idea. Their checklists of comprehension monitoring strategies (Table 2) revealed 9 out of 10 students making inferences about the author's intended meaning and 8 out of 10 attending to details while trying to construct meaning and achieve their purpose for reading.

Group B was made up of five students, all of whom missed the multiple-choice item (Table 1). However, only one student's short answer response matched the multiple-choice response. And one other student correctly wrote the main idea of the essay (Figure 1). Students in this group appeared to use the strategy of focusing on essay details more often than other strategies (Table 2). However, no one comprehension monitoring strategy appeared to stand apart from those mentioned by other groups in the study. In short, Group B scenarios (see Figure 3 for examples) mentioned virtually the same strategies articulated by Group A and Group C students, aside from the exceptions already mentioned with regard to Group A.

Group C comprised the largest number of students (35) who responded incorrectly to the multiple-choice question. About half of the students' responses to the multiple-choice item matched their written responses. Two students correctly wrote the main idea of the essay. Students in this group appeared to use inferencing as well as focusing on text generalizations most often. No one strategy, however, appeared to characterize Group C student scenarios (see Figure 3 for examples).

All students in this study appear to be fully capable of articulating what they were thinking about while achieving their purpose for reading. Their responses, once tallied and compared, reveal typical strategies that most fluent readers use when constructing meaning. The two significant observations that can be made from the data are: (1) the relatively low number of students responding correctly to the main idea questions, and (2) the comprehension monitoring strategies unique to the students in Group A.

Table 2

Responses to Checklist of Comprehension Monitoring Strategies

While reading the essay, I used the following strategies in preparation for the task of writing the main idea or thesis of "Education":	N (%)
Whole Group (N = 50)	
1. Looked for an explicit statement of main idea.	25 (50%)
2. Focused on details in the text.	33 (66%)
3. Focused on generalizations in the text.	34 (68%)
4. Made some inferences about the author's intended meaning.	43 (86%)
5. Adjusted my reading rate.	27 (54%)
6. Reread some parts of the essay I did not initially understand.	30 (60%)
Group A (N = 10)	
1. Looked for an explicit statement of main idea.	3 (30%)
2. Focused on details in the text.	8 (80%)
3. Focused on generalizations in the text.	4 (40%)
4. Made some inferences about the author's intended meaning.	9 (90%)
5. Adjusted my reading rate.	7 (70%)
6. Reread some parts of the essay I did not initially understand.	4 (40%)
Group B (N = 5)	
1. Looked for an explicit statement of main idea.	3 (50%)
2. Focused on details in the text.	5 (83%)
3. Focused on generalizations in the text.	2 (33%)
4. Made some inferences about the author's intended meaning.	3 (50%)
5. Adjusted my reading rate.	2 (33%)
6. Reread some parts of the essay I did not initially understand.	1 (16%)
Group C (N = 35)	
1. Looked for an explicit statement of main idea.	18 (51%)
2. Focused on details in the text.	18 (51%)
3. Focused on generalizations in the text.	26 (74%)
4. Made some inferences about the author's intended meaning.	28 (80%)
5. Adjusted my reading rate.	17 (48%)
6. Reread some parts of the essay I did not initially understand.	18 (51%)

Figure 1

Selected responses to short answer question: Write the thesis or main idea of E. B. White's essay, "Education."

Group A: (100% match between written responses and multiple-choice answer)

"Regardless of bias, the country public school is just as good if not slightly better than the private city school."

"There is actually more learning (not just academic) taking place in public country schools."

"I felt the main idea of the essay was that when comparing the public and private schools, the public country school is the best."

Group B: (20% match)

"Schools in the country are a personal place, yet one can easily survive and like the school in the city, the better place to be."

"Education in a country school is more personal and somewhat more casual than in a city school, and this more relaxed attitude contributes to quality education."

"The author is comparing the private city school to the country public school."

Group C: (57% match)

"Education in the country and in the city is fundamentally the same in that the children still learn and play and thrive in either situation."

"The benefits of a country public school are as many (and maybe more) than the benefits of a private school."

"This essay compares the school in the country to the city school."

Figure 2

Selected responses to comprehension monitoring question: As you read the essay, what sorts of things were you thinking about in relation to the stated purpose for reading: Read E. B. White's essay, "Education," and then write the main idea or thesis of the essay. In other words, what strategies did you use while reading to determine the main idea of the essay?

Read between the lines
Focused on literal information
Recognized a comparison was being made
Made some inferences
Asked the question: How do the facts relate to the main idea?
Looked for explicitly stated main idea
Focused on intro and concluding paragraphs and beginning sentences
Relied on previous experiences to picture what was happening
Tried to pinpoint the issues that were repeatedly referred to
Tried to analyze which one idea was the main idea
Read/reread to determine main points
Summarized first paragraph, reflected on each paragraph
Tried to understand the meaning of each sentence
Paid close attention to the first few paragraphs looking for main idea
Asked questions: What is the author trying to tell me?
Tested hypotheses as I read, trying to come up with a central theme
Looked for key sentences or descriptions of the author's feelings and opinions
Sorted out background information and descriptive information
Found out what seemed to be the predominant theme and decided what the author concluded from the essay
Asked the question: Is the author supporting the ideas that he presents as important?
Noticed biases*
Noticed sarcasm and tone of the essay*
Focused on language and the feelings experienced by narrator and son*
Tried to make predictions from the first paragraph*
Noticed subtle irony being used*

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*Responses found only in Group A written protocols.

Figure 3

Example comprehension monitoring scenarios.

Group A Sample: "While reading E. B. White's essay, I thought about my days in a private school, first through eighth grades, and compared his description to them. I looked for attitude in his writing. I watched for negative/positive comments of the writer. I noticed sarcasm and irony throughout. I looked for a connection and opinion about some point at the beginning and the ending of the story."

Group B Sample: "I asked myself: (1) What is he discussing? (2) Is there more than one thing he is discussing? (3) If so, does he compare them or just give examples and facts about each?"

Group C Sample: "As I was reading E. B. White's essay, I was looking for the main points of each section so I would be able to compare how Mr. White regarded private education and public education. I looked for the points he made about public education, then the ones he made about private education, then his comparison statements in the final paragraphs helped me to conclude as to his main thesis--education is education."

Conclusions

What does it mean when only 20% of the reading methods students in a study are able to infer the main idea of an essay about education? Several conclusions as well as questions for further research may be drawn.

First, students who achieved their purpose for reading by correctly ascertaining the main idea clearly understood the nature of the language used by White to present his argument--public schools are better for children than private schools. Although 90% of the students in the study made mention of the fact that White was comparing two types of schooling, only Group A students recognized and mentioned his bias toward public over private schooling. One inference that might be drawn is that Group A students simply had more experience reading personal essays of this type, and therefore had significant prior knowledge of persuasive discourse and author use of irony.

Second, aside from the unique features of Group A strategies, all students articulated similar types of metacognitive strategies that could be termed "generic." For example, the responses contained in Figure 2 could be divided into categories roughly corresponding to the checklist of comprehension monitoring skills (Table 2). Read/reread, focused on details, made inferences are all very useful thinking skills that help fluent readers construct meaning. Indeed, we encourage direct instruction of such skills in our reading methods classes. However, it is important to note that while all students in the study articulated and used typical comprehension monitoring strategies, 80% failed to accurately achieve the purpose for reading.

Other variables to consider are student concept of main idea as well as knowledge of text structure. Fifty percent of the students wrote a main idea that reflected a generalization of some kind, indicating that most students understood that a main idea, whether implicitly or explicitly stated, speaks to the author's overall intended message. The remaining 50% had an incorrect notion of what a main idea entails. For example, this group 35% focused on the structure of the essay, suggesting that the main idea had something to do with the comparisons being made by White. (White was indeed comparing public and private schooling, but comparison was his method of development, not the main point.) And 15% of the students merely summarized the details of the essay without drawing conclusions or making generalizations.

Questions for Further Research

An important question for further research seems to be, Which comprehension monitoring strategies are unique to certain forms of discourse and methods of development and thus enable fluent readers to construct or reconstruct the author's intended meaning? Further, can these strategies be directly taught? And does direct instruction (Roehler & Duffy, 1984) help improve students' understanding of the text while reading?

The answers to such questions have important implications for those of us who teach reading methods courses. We not only want to encourage pedagogically sound instructional strategies but also to train our students to model fluent reading behaviors. The comprehension monitoring activity described in this paper was a powerful tool for teaching the concept of metacognition to college students who were able to see the logic of their own thinking and realize that reading comprehension cannot be taken for granted, no matter how familiar the subject may be.

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Preparing Reading Teachers to Use Research in Teaching

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In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education reported that "...we must rededicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system..." (p. 1) if we are to avoid losing our national competitive advantage in various world markets. This reform has several suggested components, but two major categories of concern are reading (especially literacy) and general curricular revision. Assuming that the education profession intends to respond to this challenge in a thoughtful and rational manner, it seems likely that plans for reform will be carefully based on the best information currently available--and clearly that includes the large and ever-growing body of research literature related to reading and to other areas of the curriculum. Current knowledge about research-supported trends and practices is, and will be, essential to teachers and other school personnel as they go about the business of reform. Especially in a field as dynamic as reading, the necessity for being familiar with practices supported by current, sound research findings should be obvious; however, this need to know the research literature is the source of the problem addressed in this paper.

Being knowledgeable about current trends supported by research, while viewed as a necessary component in the solution of problems related to curriculum revision, is also a problem in itself. Many teachers report that they are not adequately prepared during their pre-service educational programs to utilize research findings to improve their teaching practices; further, they have few options for correcting this condition. While educators are enrolled in classes, either in-service or at a college or university, they are frequently kept informed by their instructors of the current practices supported by research. It becomes a much greater problem when they are not in classes because no one is providing them the necessary information, and they have not been taught the techniques for obtaining that information on their own.

It may be helpful at this point to digress a moment and clarify a fundamental distinction regarding the roles of research in the professional lives of educators. Some educators, usually university faculty, will devote much of their time and energy to the production of research; consequently, they will have a need to develop a high level of skill in such things as statistics and research methodology. The vast majority of educators, however, will not be directly involved in producing research; instead, they need to become effective consumers of the research they encounter in professional journals and other work-related sources. This group, which includes most teachers and administrators in our schools, will need to develop their skills in the areas which will enable them to keep informed about research-supported practices. Those skills include the following:

1. Locating relevant research
2. Reading and understanding that research
3. Evaluating the research that is read
4. Utilizing the research findings in their teaching and decision making practices

The effort here is to examine a course strategy designed to enable reading professionals, both teachers and administrators, to become effective consumers of educational research in the planning and implementation of research-supported reading programs.

The first step in the process of becoming an effective consumer of educational research is that of learning how to locate pertinent research. In many instances, educators are overwhelmed by the number of books, journals, and monographs available to them. If the library is large and impersonal, the problem is magnified even more, increasing the anxiety and reducing the resolve to become better informed. Since there are literally hundreds of sources available for perusal, the reader must develop a plan of study. This plan is based on becoming familiar with three major information sources: preliminary sources which are generally indexes or abstracts such as Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE), Education Index, Psychological Abstract, or Dissertation Abtracts International, are helpful; primary sources, which are typically journals such as the Reading Research Quarterly or Journal of Educational Research contain the actual reports of research and their findings; and secondary sources, which are generally textbooks, for reading what authors have to say about other people's research.

A suggested approach to implementing the plan based on the above sources is provided by Borg (1981). He suggests a process that begins with a review of the topic under consideration in one or two secondary sources to get an overview of the topic and to redefine it more precisely, followed by selecting one or two preliminary sources which are most likely to lead to relevant information. Once this is done, location of primary sources can be accomplished, resulting in appropriate reading selections. Borg goes beyond this plan to identify some of the more useful secondary and preliminary sources, one of which is the ERIC system, a valuable resource for educators, but one which requires some skill in its use to provide the greatest possible benefits. In a class setting, it is very helpful to demonstrate to students the intricacies of the system, especially the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors, Research in Education, and CIJE.

Once the sources have been examined and the research to be read has been obtained,

the next step is to develop a "reading understanding" of research. In general terms, this requires knowledge of common research terms such as variable, control group-experimental group, hypothesis, and statistically significant, and basic statistical and measurement concepts such as measures of central tendency, standard deviation, correlation, and statistical tests (t or F). It would be desirable, but probably not absolutely necessary, for a person to have taken a course in research design or statistics to master these concepts, but the learning process must include adequate examples and explanations to allow development of a comfort level with these concepts. A technique that seems to work is to provide a glossary of essential terms, then have a class activity in which everyone reads the same piece of research as it is explained by the instructor. Typically, after going through this process once or twice, people are ready to attempt reading research studies on their own. It also seems helpful if they are provided examples of different types of research such as descriptive, correlational, quasi-experimental, and experimental designs.

Perhaps the most crucial step in the process of learning to use research is the one to be discussed next--evaluating research so that decision making is based on findings that are of satisfactory quality. Many systems exist for evaluating research, but the most prevalent are the "checklists." The International Reading Association publication titled Searching the Professional Literature in Reading (Curry and Morris, 1975) has such a list in Appendix D. This list is quick to use, but requires considerable knowledge on the part of the user because it provides no explanations or examples of the actual evaluations of a research article. A more detailed checklist is found in the textbook Applying Educational Research: A Practical Guide for Teachers (Borg, 1981), along with examples of research and evaluations of that research using the checklist. The Borg list is, to this writer, superior in every way to the Curry and Morris list; however, it does not represent the explanations and depth of a third checklist published in The Journal of Educational Research (Strauss, 1969).

In Strauss' guidelines, there are general instructions for their use, 20 points for consideration, and clear explanations for each of these points. For example, under the section titled "Instruments Used," the author states:

> Poor instrumentation is another common and serious flaw in much educational research. To make certain that the instruments will correctly and consistently measure what is to be measured, they should have at least been pretested in a pilot study or calibrated in some way. A "faint tinge of validity" is not enough. Any original instrument should be described fully and illustrated with examples. It is ridiculous for a worker who has formulated an "armchair" untested measuring device to claim that the results he obtains with its use can be accepted with any degree of assurance. Several poor instruments, when used on the same project, are not necessarily more valid than one. Instruments borrowed or modified from the work of others, with courteous acknowledgements, are good; better yet are well-known, published, standardized instruments with appropriate norms. (p 5)

By practicing with these guidelines, using them on various types of research, the reader can develop considerable skill in recognizing quality or flawed research quickly. By relying on substantial findings, the reading educator can plan instruction and/or curricular modification in a rational fashion, and will be less likely to engage in questionable practices than if decisions were based on tradition or intuition.

The final skill addressed in this paper is that of actually making practical application of research findings to curriculum planning and the teaching of reading. There are many experienced and dedicated researchers trying to learn more about the reading process so that various improvements can be made. However, only a few studies will actually provide enough new knowledge to result in major educational revision. The consumer of research should not be disappointed by this fact; instead he/she should recognize the significant studies as being springboards to critical thinking about the potential applications of any new knowledge acquired from research. As Borg (1981) pointed out, "...a bit of thinking on your part will reveal ways to apply findings that the researcher never dreamed of." (p. 279)

It is through this process that research holds the greatest promise for reading professionals--by providing new ideas and creating the impetus for critical thinking about solutions to problems facing us. As the application of research findings is tested and examined, improvements in the delivery system will result, leading to better teaching and learning in reading and related content areas.

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THE LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM AND EARLY PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE - LEARNING TECHNIQUES AND SCREENING DEVICES

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The need for practical experience in teacher undergraduate programs has been recognized for many years; and, virtually every program includes at least a student teaching component. Many require successful completion of practicum work before student teaching can occur. Despite these gains in teacher education, recent critiques of teacher effectiveness have pointed to a reexamination of teacher preparation programs.

Ironically, this problem has surfaced at a time when significant gains in effective teaching practices have been documented. For example, cooperative learning techniques have resulted in student gains on both lower-order and higher-order academic learning (Johnson, et. al., 1984; Slavin, 1983; Sharan, 1980). The link-word method improves retention of information for students at all levels (Pressley, Levin, Delaney, 1982; Pressley, Miller & Levin, 1980; Atkinson, 1975). Guided content reading techniques can improve comprehension and encourage higher level thinking (Ankney & McClurg, 1981; Bean & Pardi, 1979; Manzo, 1975) and inquiry/inductive thinking strategies positively affect the acquisition of concepts, information and attitudes (Voss, 1982; Elefant, 1980; Suchman, 1964).

YET - Most teachers use the lecture/recitation mode of teaching almost exclusively (Goodlad, 1983). Why is transfer of these strategies into our nation's classrooms such a problem? A primary consideration is the amount and type of training required to become competent in using a teaching strategy. Although some effective practices are minor variations of the most common recitation mode (Goodlad, 1983; Sirotnik, 1982), other strategies, such as the use of cooperative investigation or management of inquiry, require arduous training and practice (Joyce, et al., 1985; Johnson, et al., 1984; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). Successful training in these complex skills include understanding the theory, observing expert modeling of the skills, practicing with feedback, and coaching when skills are being transferred to the classroom (Johnson, et al., 1984; Joyce & Showers, 1983).

Practicum work, properly structured and executed, can play a key role in achieving the desired results in teacher undergraduate education. After criticizing most current practicum and student teaching experiences, Berliner (1985) recommends much needed "pedagogical laboratories" in undergraduate preservice education--laboratories equipped with video and television equipment - places where prospective teachers can "have students to whom one can teach concepts, where expert teachers can provide critiques of the lessons, and where the peers of the novice teacher and the children themselves can join in the analysis of the teaching activities that have just occurred. (p.6)"

COMPETENCIES

The philosophy of our early practicums is to provide teacher trainees with exposure to classroom activities through working directly with classroom teachers. They observe and participate with good teachers who provide the best methods and techniques. Then they are given one-to-one and small group assessment of their experiences. College students are given opportunities to assess their academic capacities and work on those which best support classroom educators. They see the supervising teachers modeling personality profiles at various grade levels. The daily program also helps give an idea of the variety of activities which compose a school day and instruction processes under a variety of circumstances.

To insure the competence of our students before they enter student teaching a group of professors have developed seventeen competencies for undergraduate practicums. These competencies have been tried and revised over a three year period. They are used in all of the practicums and student teaching. Each competency is clearly defined with objectives, indicators, and descriptors. The seventeen competencies are:

1. TIME MANAGEMENT - the planning of activities with reasonable time limits set in relation to teacher-established goals.
2. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT - the use of strategies or actions that facilitate the completion of tasks. Classroom management could include organizing such things as space, materials, facilities, time and people.
3. COMMUNICATION SKILLS - those skills which allow the student to communicate effectively with learners both verbally and non-verbally. Communication skills also include the skills of writing, speaking, gesturing, using adequate "wait time," eye contact, and providing learners with clear and explicit statements regarding directions, criteria and appropriate, acceptable behaviors.
4. IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN - the timing of the presentation chosen by the student and the rhythm of interaction between student and learners. Implementation of instructional plans is exhibited by the inclusion of the total plan and/or the modification of objectives or methods in relation to the student's perceived mood of the class and individual learners.
5. EVALUATION SKILLS - the techniques and goals used to analyze knowledge, skills and attitudes, and, through the use of the results of the evaluation, to determine areas of learner difficulty. Evaluation skills are exhibited through a clearly stated and accurate evaluation of the learner presented to the learner, parents and school officials.
6. HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS - showing emphathy for the learner, being who one really

is, and continually showing acceptance and respect of the learner as a person. Human relations skills also include promoting learner success in teaching/learning process and learner involvement and providing the conditions that allow the learner to be an active participant in the teaching/learning process.

7. PERSONALITY VARIABLES - those factors which form the basic nature of the student including mental health, self-concept, modeling of appropriate behaviors and a quality of "charisma." Personality variables include the behaviors indicating flexibility, sense of humor, enthusiasm, acceptance of self and others, openness and honesty and ability to trust learners.

8. DECISION-MAKING AND AWARENESS - exhibited by good judgement and common sense when planning for teaching and responding to events as they occur in the classroom. Decision-making and awareness are components of the interaction between the student and the immediate environment.

9. KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT - the use of the acquired knowledge of individual and group characteristics in relation to the establishment of a structure, which will cause on-task actions on the part of the learners and will best meet the needs of individual learners and develop positive self-concept.

10. KNOWLEDGE OF DISTRICT POLICIES AND STANDARDS - a student must understand rights and responsibilities as specified in district policies. Through performance consistent with these policies and standards which pertain to assignments, the student can then operate within the framework of expectations, will have a basis for self-evaluation, and will have direction for the improvement of performance.

11. KNOWLEDGE OF DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY AND INSTRUCTIONAL POLICIES - best illustrated by a student exhibiting behavior consistent with the district philosophy and instructional policies. This understanding will help insure that teaching practices will be congruent with those behavior guidelines and the district philosophy.

12. CONTENT PROFICIENCY - demonstrated through teaching without total dependence on textbook and/or other written materials while raising appropriate questions during presentations and answering learners' questions in order to clarify what has been presented.

13. LESSON PLANNING - the development of plans which have a clear purpose, a description of content and methodology, an evaluation mechanism and a method of achieving closure and/or extension of the lesson. Lesson planning is the developing of a series of lessons for a unit of study to ensure a balanced learning period or day.

14. LOCATION AND USE OF RESOURCES - illustrated by a student's knowledge of a broad spectrum of learning resources, how to gain access to them, and how to use them appropriately. Location and use of resources involve the matching of various learning resources to goals and objectives and to the need of individual learners.

15. LEARNER NEEDS ASSESSMENT - the ability to determine individual learner needs (social, emotional, educational, physical, etc.) and to consider these needs in planning and implementing learning experiences.

16. MEETING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS - the identification of specific needs of the learner, selecting the goals and objectives appropriate to those needs, attending to individual differences through experiences compatible with ability and interest of the learners.

17. ALTERNATIVES FOR INSTRUCTION - the use of a full range of instructional methods, appropriate to the individual learner's level of maturity and the class level of experience. Alternatives for instruction are demonstrated by a variety of alternatives in instructional plans devised in relation to recognized individual needs.

The competencies evaluate each student's strengths and weaknesses early in the program. This allows personnel working with the student to provide advisement. Fulfilling the practicums also helps the students to make the choice of areas they really want to pursue by the time they student teach. Another strength of the competencies is that there is time for regrouping for those who find they do not like working with children. Early practicums are a real asset to both the college and the students in planning so that needs can be met.

FIELD EXPERIENCES FOR PROSPECTIVE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS

One of our earliest practicum or field experiences is designed for the college students who think they may want to teach. This class, designed for freshmen and sophomores, has several primary purposes, all designed to help the students determine if the teaching profession is a plausible goal for them as individuals. The class determines whether students have the essential academic capacities for teaching as a career. This is also stressed in the area of GPA requirements; the College of Education requires a minimum of 2.5 GPA to enter the teaching program. This early practicum experience also determines, through a series of evaluations, whether students have demonstrated the essential personal capacities to qualify them for teaching as a career. Finally, students are able to discover the varying dimensions of the role of the teacher.

In order to accomplish these goals for early field experiences, a number of factors are provided. There is a required number of regular campus class sessions with the college professor. Students are assigned to a classroom teacher for a semester (30-32 hours in the classroom). Every attempt is made to match the subject area and the age level preference of the college student, recognizing that sometimes this is not possible. The students are also required to complete the CAT examination, passing with a minimum

70 percent, based on a 12th grade level. Additionally there are personal interviews between the college students and their college professor for this practicum.

During the time that a college student is involved in the classroom, there are several areas that are stressed. These students will serve as teachers' aides, they can help individual students or small groups of students, they can grade papers, do bulletin boards, assist on field trips, and any number of other opportunities to expose them to the dimensions of a classroom teacher's responsibilities.

The role of the supervising teacher for these students is important. Regular and punctual attendance is kept: one unexcused absence can cause automatic dismissal from the course. The supervising teacher is also responsible for providing the many experiences that the college students need to help determine their decisions towards the teaching profession. Upon providing these experiences, the supervising teacher must also evaluate the college students as they work with children. During this time periodic visitations by the college professor also occur. Provision is made for discussion and feedback between the supervising teacher and the college professor as well as the college student and the supervising teacher.

This phase of the practicum experiences provides the initial "hands-on" experience for the preservice students. It also gives the faculty an opportunity to begin what ought to be a closely monitored and meaningful mentorship with the future teachers.

PROFESSIONAL SEMESTER FIELD EXPERIENCE

The 500 level practicum, which occurs in the junior or senior year, provides a structure for achieving transfer of identified teaching strategies and techniques into the classroom. This semester-long practicum occurs in conjunction with six methods classes. The methods instructors and the practicum supervisors meet to plan and coordinate efforts and requirements. Thus, the theory and procedures of a teaching strategy can be presented in the methods course, modeled by the practicum supervising teacher, and practiced by the practicum student. Feedback to the students comes from the supervising teacher daily, from a University coordinator twice a week, and from personal viewing and discussion of videotapes of their teaching sessions.

The applications of the early practicum students in the Language Arts classroom are as varied as individual classes. For example, a methods teacher may introduce the theory behind the process writing approach and present research documenting its success. The student can observe the strategy in action in the supervising teacher's classroom. Finally, the student has the opportunity to practice these process writing procedures with children and receive expert feedback from supervisors.

Each supervising teacher works with three to four practicum students. In turn the practicum students teach small groups (5-8) of children. Before teaching a lesson the practicum student must discuss and gain approval of daily lesson plans. The supervising teacher provides the student with feedback following each practicum session. Midway through the semester, the practicum student changes grade levels and supervising teachers. At the conclusion of the practicum experience the student is evaluated on a number of identified competencies. Satisfactory performance is required before being admitted to the student teaching program. The one recurring problem encountered by everyone involved with this practicum is lack of time. Several modifications, including extending the experience over two semesters, are under consideration.

Currently this practicum experience, termed "Professional Semester," is only one of several options available to our undergraduates. The success of this practicum is becoming apparent. In a recent college-wide retreat aimed at self examination of existing programs, several field coordinators identified the Professional Semester practicum experience as the one observable difference among undergraduates engaged in the student teaching experience. Positive feedback of this nature indicates that the work necessary to coordinate and execute such a practicum is reaping benefits for our students.

These practicums are a step in the direction of one of the goals of the Holmes Group Report, that of connecting schools of education with schools by creating working partnerships among university faculty members, practicing teachers, administrators, and students in teacher preparation programs. (Murray, 1986). Practicum experience is a most important component in teacher preparation. It strengthens undergraduate teacher preparation programs and insures developing qualified candidates into the profession in the field of education. It also helps the college become more accountable to our profession for the quality of students' educational experiences and the teaching competency of our graduates.

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Using Videotaped Remedial Reading Instruction to Improve Teaching

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In the summer of 1986 twenty five remedial reading teachers were videotaped while each was teaching reading lessons to two children who had been referred to a reading clinic for help. The videotapes were one of several devices employed to help the teachers gain insight into their own teaching behavior and improve their teaching. Two professors working with the teachers were able to gather data to help them assess the overall worth of the tapes in the total program and draw some conclusions that will help in planning more elaborate programs of the same type for the future.

Rationale for the Study

In any kind of teaching teachers should be able to improve their own efficiency if they were able to observe themselves in the actual teaching act. Most human beings are unable to view their own actions in an objective manner (as others view them) because their physical position in the events in which they perform prevents them from seeing the whole picture. In addition, built-in mental and emotional biases, concerning the value and effects of one's own behavior, further retard the ability to be objective concerning ways to improve. Self consciousness in seeing oneself on the video-tube is also a barrier to be overcome.

Videotaping of lessons should furnish teachers with an opportunity to see themselves as if they were observing another teacher working with students. Certainly it would seem that in viewing tapes of their teaching they are likely to be able to assume a more detached stance than they can during the teaching act. In addition, in such viewing they are likely to be able to recall what they were thinking and the momentary restraints under which they were working. It seems to the writer that opportunities to do this, if extensive enough and existing under the right conditions, should have a marked and beneficial effect on reading teachers' skill and insights.

The potential value of videotaping to make an important contribution to teacher education has been pointed out by Berliner (1985) who wrote:

> We must provide our novice teachers with environments in which to experiment with producing cognitive and affective change in children. We need real laboratories in education, just as do chemists, biologists, and physicists who also must learn to experiment while they are in training.
>
> Second, we need video equipment and the money to pay experts to analyze teacher performance.... The average teacher in training in the United States gets very little analysis of his or her teaching performance with video tape.
>
> Our physicians and athletes put in their time learning the concepts and skills they need through video tape analysis, a step closer in fidelity to "the real world." We in teacher preparation need now, also, to evaluate the fidelity of our training programs.

The writer was surprised to learn of the dearth of published research studies of attempts to use videotaped instruction to improve teaching performance of any kind. He had previously conducted a pilot study (Ramsey, 1968) to gain preliminary information which would enable him to do a more comprehensive and useful follow-up study of the use of videotaping to improve instruction in a remedial reading clinic.

When interest in this line of research was renewed last year, a literature search was done by the UM-St. Louis library to assemble a list of studies on the topic of use of television in studying teacher behavior in reading instruction. The results were surprising. It was amazing to learn that since 1969 no study designed to further test the hypothesis of the writer's pilot study had been conducted--in either clinic or classroom.

Needless to say, this discovery whetted interest in further exploration of the topic. Since over 15 years had elapsed since the original study, and the sophistication of videotaping equipment and procedure had improved, a new pilot study was done last summer in the UM-St. Louis Reading Clinic. A teaching station was equipped with one camera and a microphone suspended over a central teaching spot. The camera controls were set so that the teacher, the children, the blackboard, and the immediate teaching area were in good focus. The situation was arranged so that the equipment and the videotaping was done from a remote control-room.

The videotaping done in the study was conducted as one kind of practicum activity in the clinical reading course designed to improve the teaching effectiveness of graduate students who were studying for certification in remedial reading. It was explained to students that the taping was being done to help them gain insights into their own skill and to improve their teaching. Various other kinds of helpful feedback were provided on a day-to-day basis by the two professors conducting the course.

During a six week period 24 teachers, each of whom worked with two disabled readers for 75 minutes each day, were involved in the pilot study. All 24 of the teachers were videotaped teaching one lesson, and five were videotaped twice. Each was observed from the remote

viewing-control-room by one of two professors, who also wrote a critique of their lesson. In six cases, students first viewed their tapes and then completed a self evaluation of their teaching based upon the following questions:

1. What did you like about your lesson (consider your performance, the students)? (Be sure to consider appropriate parts of a D.R.A., L.E.A., or other format.)
2. What would you do differently if you could do it again? (Be sure to consider appropriate parts of a D.R.A., L.E.A., or other format.)
3. How did the videotaping affect you and/or the students?
4. What is your overall rating of the lesson? (Rate 1-5; 5 = my best, 1 = one of my worst)

The graduate clinicians then received the professor's written critique of their lesson. In the other 18 cases the teachers first read the professor's critique, watched their tapes, and then completed a written self-evaluation of their teaching.

Since this was a pilot study, whose purpose was to explore the feasibility of a larger study, only descriptive data were gathered. The study sought answers to questions which are answered in the conclusions section.

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

The teachers were a somewhat heterogeneous group. All except one were experienced teachers with a mean number of years of experience of almost six years. As a group they had taught at all levels, pre-school through high school. Most were elementary teachers with primary or intermediate grade experience. All possessed a bachelor's degree and nearly all were within six hours of completing the master's degree in reading. Four regarded themselves as "excellent" reading teachers and 17 rated themselves as being "above average." Only three rated themselves as "average."

Half of the teachers had not had their instruction videotaped before. Nine of these were videotaped at the pre-certification level --an average of 150 minutes each. One had been videotaped at the in-service level (for three hours total) and two had been taped in an individual intelligence test course taken at the graduate level. One veteran teacher with 10 years experience had been videotaped for nine hours--the maximum for the group.

QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Self analysis of their videotapes was reported by 10 of the students as being "extremely helpful" (4) or "very helpful" (6) in improving their teaching. Eleven of the group reported it was "helpful." Only three reported that it was only "slightly helpful" or "not helpful." In their interviews the teachers reported that neither they nor the children were concerned by the presence of the camera or distracted by it.

Reactions to the worth of different types of techniques for evaluating students' videotapes were revealing. The method valued most highly was conferring with the professor about the tape. Second in order of preference was the use of the professor's written comments. Self analysis of the tapes was the least valued.

As far as a preferred order (sequence) of feedback was concerned, the preference for the type to be given first was to have a conference with the professor. (Several suggested that the professor and student view the tape together and discuss possible lesson improvements.) Of the least perceived value was self analysis of the tape.

Students were asked to rate the use of several possible activities, if time were not a constraint. A personal conference with the professor was rated "exceedingly helpful" by over half of the students. A fourth of the group rated "viewing the tape with the professor" to be of the same magnitude. There was strong interest in "seeing the tapes of other students" and "the use of three cameras (one on the children, one on the teacher, and one on the blackboard)."

Activities often rated as only "slightly helpful" or "not helpful" were "viewing the tape with the children" and "children would wear wireless microphones." Forty per cent of the group, however, thought that having the teacher wear a wireless microphone would be helpful.

Of several experiences provided in the course, videotaping was noted to be "somewhat" or "very valuable" by sixty per cent of the students in helping them succeed in the course.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data gathered in the questionnaire, and in student interviews, the following conclusions seem to be warranted from the study:

1. Videotaping of lessons and playing them back were valuable in promoting teacher success in the clinical situation.

2. Neither the children nor the teacher were greatly distracted by the television camera. Most of the teachers reported that once the first few minutes of videotaping were past, teaching and learning proceeded as if no camera were present.

3. While the use of the teaching laboratory with one fixed camera produced useful results, a two or three camera set-up, and teacher-worn microphones, would have produced even better results.

4. Joint teacher-professor viewing of the tapes, and simultaneous discussion of them, would be a desirable feature in such a project--even more desirable than written comments by the professor or teacher self-analysis of the tapes.

5. The results obtained in this project were promising enough so that a larger scale project of a similar type should be undertaken.

6. The basic rationale supporting the study needs to be tied to some theoretical framework very appealing to outside funding agencies, and especially the federal government.

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BUILDING LISTENING COMPREHENSION: MODELS FOR USE WITH PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

Dr. Barbara Spurling
Dorothy Padron
Southwest Missouri State University

We are going to talk with you today about the relationship between listening and reading and how to encourage elementary school children to become action listeners so they will become action readers!

In many ways listening and reading are very much alike. They are both intake skills. In both listening and reading, one takes in information. They are both called receptive skills.

In addition, both of them must be processed serially, that is items are processed in sequence. In listening one hears one item after another, in reading one reads one item after another.

Children beginning in reading clearly demonstrate a tie in between listening and reading. Most of the time beginners read aloud. They read out loud, not just so the teacher can hear them, but so that they can hear themselves. They listen to themselves as they read.

We can estimate a youngster's ability to process information by giving him a listening comprehension test. If he has a lot of difficulty understanding materials read to him or told to him, he will undoubtedly have difficulty reading and understanding what he has read. The child who is a poor listener will probably be a poor reader.

Finally both listening and reading share some of the same skills. Listening and reading both seem to include such skills as:

the ability to follow a sequence,
the ability to recognize inferences,
the ability to find the main idea and supporting details, and
the ability to evaluate what is read or heard.

Listening and reading are not totally alike however. They have some significant differences one must be sure the youngsters understand.

One main difference between listening and reading is that one can reread, but one cannot relisten. The child, or adult, who misses part of the message in reading-materials can always go back and read it over, mull it over, and figure it out. But the individual who has not heard all the message, usually asks for it to be repeated--if he realizes that he missed some information. Frequent repetitions are sometimes grudgingly given. If, however, he is listening to the radio or the TV, the possibility of the message being repeated is practically nil, so he must tune up his ears.

The speed of the discourse, the rapidity with which the information is presented varies when one considers reading or listening. In reading, one goes along as fast as one's eye (or finger) can move. So the reader controls the speed. In listening, the speaker, not the listener, controls the speed of the message. So the listener must tune up his ears so he can process the information coming his way.

We have spent a lot of time in elementary schools concerning ourselves with reading skills, reading programs, and children with reading problems. We have spent very little time concerning ourselves with listening skills, listening programs, and children with listening problems. We can't assume that children are listening, that they really know how to listen.

We know that if we want action readers, we need to teach reading skills to each individual. We want action listeners. We want children who know how to listen, what to listen for, and how to react to what they have heard. So we have to teach listening skills to each individual, giving each child lots of practice in listening.

Mrs. Padron and I are going to share with you some ideas for helping children become action listeners.

I believe at some time in our busy daily existence we have each felt that we are living in a time when no one listens to us. My husband says I do not listen to him, and he certainly doesn't listen attentively to me while watching the world series. Parents do not listen to children, children do not listen to parents. TEACHERS-STUDENTS, how often do we listen to each other? It may be an overstatement to say that no one listens, yet to find one person ACTIVELY listening to another-listening with empathy and understanding is a rare experience.

Having another person truly listen to us is one of life's great joys. To have someone's undivided attention, no matter how briefly, is extremely satisfying and therapeutic. It enhances our sense of self-worth.

I want to stress that good reading and listening skills do not occur "naturally," but are the result of training, instruction, and a desire to communicate effectively. Such training and instruction begins at the kindergarten level, and needs to be fostered at every grade level throughout elementary school and beyond. It should begin on the first day of school when teachers and students meet.

Let me share with you some guidelines for fostering ACTIVE listening in your classrooms.

First, it begins informally and with you acting as a role model of the ideal listener. In order for active listening skills to develop, the TEACHER must set an emotional and affective climate in the classroom.

Speak in a pleasant tone of voice, one in which the pupils can enjoy listening. Speak as though you can hardly wait to tell the children what you have to say.

Don't expect youngsters to "sit still and listen" for long periods of time--vary the activities.

Be a model listener yourself. Don't save your papers to mark while students are speaking.

Remember that listening is more than hearing, and help children recognize the fact that attention to a speaker's words often requires thinking.

Tape record or videotape yourself teaching. Review it critically for negative behaviors that may "turn off" listeners. Ask someone else to help critique.

Make sure that your speaking speed does not exceed the children's listening speed.

Guard against giving instructions such as "let's all pay attention." Rather, indicate for what the pupils should be listening. Avoid negative comments like, "If you'd been listening, you'd have known that."

Discourage interruptions of the speaker, even if he makes an error in speech or in facts presented.

Don't call on the same children repeatedly. Think about ways to involve more children in discussions with eye contact, physical proximity, and conversation. Encourage them to think about what they hear.

Don't encourage fake attention. The teacher might lead a discussion on the fact that merely looking intently at the speaker does not guarantee good listening. Above all, be sure a child has something worthwhile to listen to--a valid reason for listening.

Avoid the practice of repeating directions or explanations unnecessarily. If students realize the teacher will most likely make an explanation more than once, they may develop poor habits of listening.

Let me emphasize that listening is a language skill, and that humans are uniquely suited for making and listening to speech sounds, but the aspect of listening which I am emphasizing today is ACTIVE LISTENING.

Now, Dr. Sperling will explain some research she has conducted about listening coverage in language arts textbooks.

Listening Skills in Contemporary Language Texts

The information in this handout is drawn from a research study I am pursuing about the Trends in Elementary Language Textbooks Regarding the Teaching of Listening Skills. I will report the information I have found at this point.

The three major areas of language arts are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is the foundation for the other areas. It is the first language arts area to be utilized; one begins listening at birth. It is the most frequently employed of the language arts areas; one listens more than one speaks, reads, or writes. With such an important role in processing information, listening would seem to be of paramount importance as an area of study for elementary children. In the past, not much in the way of listening instruction was presented in language books used in elementary schools. My concern was to determine emphasis on listening skill instruction in the books currently presented by publishers.

Listening is a complicated constellation of skills. There are many variations of listening, depending on purpose, setting relationship to the speaker, and anticipated reaction. From reading journal articles on listening skills, textbooks used in college methods classes for language arts teachers, and elementary language texts, I have identified twenty-eight listening skills or tasks that utilize listening. Teachers might use this list as a measure for the scope of the language text being used or as a measure for their own curriculum.

Several language arts experts have identified types of listening and have attempted to group listening skills or listening tasks into three or four levels. Ordinarily experts have used the levels of reading comprehension for a guide for levels of listening, thus pointing out the strong correlation between listening and reading. Generally there are three listening levels mentioned in the literature: appreciative, attentive, and critical. I have used in the handout the descriptions written by Donoghue.[1]

In many classrooms, the textbook is the curriculum guide. The scope and the sequence of instructional information in the text and the teacher's manual predict the content of the language arts instruction. Therefore it was deemed appropriate to study selected language texts in an attempt to discover the emphasis on listening skill instruction.

The following language texts were selected: Ginn English Program, Language for Daily Use (Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, Pub.), Harper and Row English, Holt English Program, Houghton Mifflin English, The Laidlaw Language Program, Series E: MacMillan English, Language: Skills and Use (Scott, Foresman and Co.), and Silver Burdett English. The copyright dates range from 1983 to 1985. Although most programs include

[1]Donoghue, Mildred R. The Child and the English Language Arts. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company, Publishers, 1979.

texts for grades K through eight, for the purposes of this study, grades K through grade six were studies. Scope and sequence charts, checklists of language skills, indexes, tables of content, and actual lesson plans were perused to identify the skills taught in the series.

Charts are included in this handout using the terminology of the manual to indicate the kind of listening skill to be learned. Unless otherwise noted these charts are drawn from each publisher's scope and sequence chart. An X in the chart indicates the grade level for the first coverage of that listening skill. A caution should be made to the reader of this research that the first coverage could be one lesson or several. In fact, at any level the coverage may be slight or intensive. The teacher who is using this research as an aid to textbook selection would need to obtain teacher's manuals to judge the quality of the lessons.

As the research is in progress, formal conclusions cannot be drawn. However, some obvious impressions can be seen. In few textbook programs are listening skills lessons taught at all grade levels. In some programs listening skills are taught that are traditionally classified as attentive skills: following directions, listening for detail, and so forth. In a few programs critical listening skills are taught but are reserved for higher intermediate grade levels. No manual classifies the skills under the headings of appreciative, attentive, and critical, although language arts experts commonly refer to these categories.

There are a variety of motives for selecting a language text for one's elementary school. Some components of language arts may be stronger than others in any text. Some components may have a higher priority than others with the persons selecting the textbook program. While teachers may not select a language text on the basis of listening skills alone, the teacher should be aware of the importance of listening skills. In situations where listening skills instruction is not a major strength of the language text provided in the class, the teacher will need to provide much valuable instruction.

LISTENING SKILLS

Many language arts experts have described levels of listening. The following are three types identified by Mildred Donoghue:

Appreciative listening is the ability to listen for enjoyment and creative response (p. 94).

Attentive listening demands that the attention of the listener be focused on one person or on one electronic medium so that the listener can purposefully respond either orally or in written fashion (p. 95).

Critical listening is the most complex kind of listening to teach or to learn. Implied in critical listening is the use of a highly conscious standard or criterion for evaluating spoken material while comprehending (p. 99).

Set purpose for listening: A continuum of skills leads children through these three levels of listening.

1. to be courteous
2. to converse
3. to use media effectively
4. to appreciate literature
5. to gain a visual image
6. to establish a mood
7. to note correct language usage of others
8. to follow directions
9. to take notes
10. to select specific details
11. to discern a sequence
12. to gain meanings from context
13. to interpret unusual language
14. to perceive relationships
15. to draw inferences
16. to anticipate and predict
17. to summarize information
18. to gain the main idea
19. to discuss
20. to separate fact from opinion
21. to separate relevant from irrelevant information
22. to separate fact from opinion
23. to recognize bias and propaganda
24. to determine the speaker's purpose
25. to assess the speaker's point of view
26. to assess the speaker's qualifications
27. to evaluate the authenticity and validity of the theme or point of view
28. to make judgments

LISTENING SKILLS

Ginn English Program
Grades K-8 1983

Concepts	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening to:							
songs	X						
poems	X						
nursery rhymes	X						
stories	X						
Listening for:							
main ideas	X						
sequence	X						
cause and effect	X						
details	X						
Listening to a story or poem (for sequence, mood, rhyme, etc.)		X	X				
Listening to messages or directions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening to or for factual information		X	X	X	X	X	X

LISTENING SKILLS

Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, Pub.
Language for Daily Use K-8
Phoenix Ed. 1983

Concepts	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Auditory discrimination							
Familiar sounds	X						
Loud and soft sounds	X						
Rhyming words	X						
Story details	X						
Story sequence	X						
Directions	X						
Riddles	X						
Listening Courtesy		X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening for appreciation		X	X	X	X	X	X
For rhyming words		X	X	X	X	X	X
For sequence		X	X	X	X	X	X
For details		X	X	X	X	X	X
To directions		X	X	X	X	X	X
To test instructions		X	X	X	X	X	X
To distinguish fact from opinion				X	X	X	X
To devices of persuasion*							

*Taught in Grade 7

LISTENING SKILLS

Harper and Row English 1983

Concepts	K*	1	2	3	4	5	6
Main idea		X	X	X	X	X	X
Details		X	X	X	X	X	X
Sequence		X	X	X	X	X	X
Sound words		X	X	X	X	X	X
LISTENING AND SPEAKING:							
Discussions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Poems		X	X	X	X	X	X
Stories and plays		X	X	X	X	X	X
Directions and explanations		X	X	X	X	X	X
Book reports			X	X	X	X	X
Research reports					X	X	X
Interviews						X	X
Commercials							X

*The Kindergarten Checklist of Language Skills Lists: Remembering Significant Details, Remembering a Simple Sequence, Following Oral Directions, Listening to Answers, Listening to Questions, Paraphrasing Spoken Messages, Identifying Main Ideas, Summarizing, Understanding Interrelationships, and Following a Sequence.

LISTENING SKILLS

Houghton Mifflin English K-8 1983

Concepts	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening guidelines	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening to follow directions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening for details	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening for information	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening for main idea	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening for persuasive words				X	X	X	X
Listening for pitch, stress, and juncture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening for sequence	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening for pleasure	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

LISTENING SKILLS — Holt English Program 1984

Concepts	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Conversing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Details					X	X	X
Following oral directions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Following the speaker's plan						X	X
Identifying point of view						X	X
Inference							X
Listening Plan: Taking notes		X	X	X	X	X	X
Asking questions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Overcoming distractions			X	X	X	X	X
Predictions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Common courtesies				X	X	X	X
Main idea	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Opinions						X	X
Recalling information	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sequence (signal words)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Summarizing						X	X
Word meaning*							

*Found in levels 7 and 8

LISTENING SKILLS — The Laidlaw Language Program Readiness through 8 1983

Concepts	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Stories	X	X					
Following directions	X	X					
Identifying	X	X					
Riddles	X	X					
Rhyming words	X	X					
Listening to poetry*					X	X	X

*Information from the Teacher's Guide to the Management System in the Teacher's Edition for each level.

LISTENING SKILLS — Scott, Foresman and Co. Language: Skills and Use Second Ed. 1984

Concepts	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listening to Poetry		X	X	X			
Listening to Poetry and Stories					X	X	X
Listening to Directions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Listening for Detail, Sequence or Special Purpose		X	X	X	X	X	X

LISTENING SKILLS — Series E: Macmillan English 1984

Concepts	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Listen to follow directions	X						
Listen for specific information	X						
Listen to recall order and relationships	X						
Identify sounds and rhymes	X						
Listen for details	X						
Listen to recall sequence	X						
Listen to identify sounds and rhymes*	X						
Purposes for listening		X	X	X	X	X	X
Directions		X	X	X	X	X	X
Main idea and details			X	X	X	X	X
Fact and Opinion			X	X	X	X	X
Telephone messages		X		X			

Noted in the Scope and Sequence Chart: Series E Teacher's Editions contain Listening Skills activities throughout every unit to develop and expand listening skills.

*Above information from the Kindergarten/Readiness Chart.

LISTENING SKILLS — Silver Burdett English 1985

Concepts	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
In discussions and conversations		X	X	X	X	X	X
For main idea or details		X	X	X	X	X	X
On telephone		X	X	X	X	X	X
For rhyme and rhythm		X	X	X	X	X	X
To appreciate literature		X	X	X	X	X	X
For sequence		X	X	X	X	X	X
To answer questions, interviews			X	X	X	X	X
To follow directions		X	X	X	X	X	X
For fact vs. opinion			X	X	X	X	X
Media awareness				X	X	X	X
Critical listening				X	X	X	X
For context clues						X	X
Manners and techniques			X	X	X	X	X
To introductions*							

*Taught grade 7 level

SECONDARY TEACHERS' AWARENESS OF READING SKILLS

Bruce A. Lloyd
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Over the years, perceptive educators have been concerned with the effective teaching of reading skills not only at the elementary level, but in middle schools and high schools as well. Reading helps learners of all ages gain knowledge/information as well as enjoyment from print. Moreover, reading is a long term developmental process that must be taught throughout all grades (K-12), because the skills needed to master print are cumulative and change as learners move upwards through the grades.

The present study, supported by a grant from the Faculty Research Fund of Western Michigan University, was concerned with discovering the nature of secondary teachers' awareness of reading skills. That is, could they write out or list the reading skills needed by their students? To this end, a series of questions (based on Braam and Walker, 1973) was developed and validated (Berdie and Anderson, 1974). The final survey instrument was administered to high school teachers and middle school teachers.

The results of the study are described later, but first it seems important to explain that there is little, if any, reported literature about this topic. Although all educators and reading authorities agree on the value or need for fluent reading on the part of students, reports of high school teachers' awareness of reading skills are sparse. The initial study by Braam and Roehm (1964) concluded that the high school teachers sampled were largely unaware of the reading skills needed by their students. In a later replication (Braam and Walker, 1973) similar conclusions were drawn and it was noted that the high school reading specialists were more aware of reading skills than were the content teachers.

In general, secondary research studies tend to focus on emphasizing reading awareness among high school teachers (Criscuolo, 1982) and inservice programs that are designed to explain the reading techniques teachers can use (Criscuolo, et.al., 1980). Other areas of emphasis are on secondary remedial reading programs (Lehr, 1981) and special reading programs (Cushenbery, 1982).

One recent study investigated the accuracy of content teachers' judgements about the reading abilities of secondary students and explored the relationship between the types of information that content teachers use for making their judgements. Participants included 31 English and 22 social studies teachers. The factors noted were oral reading, study skills, vocabulary knowledge, comprehension skills, and physical/attitudinal elements. No significant relationships were found between types of information and judgements of reading abilities (Frager, 1984). Moreover, teachers were not asked to note reading skills, but had them presented as criterion reference factors.

Stevens (1978) investigated the accuracy of teacher judgement by comparing 30 teachers' diagnoses of an eight-year-old student's reading abilities to a criterion diagnosis developed by a group of four expert diagnosticians. An average of thirty percent of the individual teachers' diagnostic statements agreed with the criterion diagnosis. However, this was at the elementary level and the reading skills noted were at the beginning reading level where oral reading is stressed.

In their investigation of the role of reading instruction in secondary content classrooms, Smith and Feathers (1983) compared teacher stated goals/practices with student perception of those elements. Goals were stated broadly (... want students to love the subject) and no reading skills were listed. Interestingly enough, the students perceived their teachers as wanting them to obtain the facts from reading assignments. (Obtaining facts is an important reading skill).

The dearth of literature regarding the specific topic of the present undertaking is significant because one could conclude that other researchers may not as yet have conducted or reported such studies. Moreover, discovering current teacher knowledge of reading skills is a step that follows attitudinal investigation, Lloyd and Opria, 1986. If teachers believe it important to teach reading skills, but are unaware of the nature of those skills, the skills may not be taught. Therefore, the information generated from this type of study can be of great value. When teacher knowledge of reading skills is discovered, areas of insufficiency can be made known to them and corrected accordingly through inservice programs.

Data were gathered through a survey instrument originally designed by Braam and Walker (1973) and subsequently revised for use in the present study (Lloyd, 1985). A total of eight middle and secondary schools participated. However, at this writing, data were available from one middle school and one high school.

The high school had upwards of fifty teachers and thirty-seven of them submitted useable surveys. These were 17 female and 20 male respondents. They ranged in teaching experience from one year to 36 years and many taught more than one subject. Among them were four teachers

with 13 years of experience; four with 15 years; and four with 21 years. There were nine English teachers; eight mathematics teachers; and six business teachers. Interestingly enough three teachers did not respond to this question. In addition, five taught social studies, four science, three reading, two music, two foreign languages, etc.

Thirteen of the respondents had taken an undergraduate reading methods course; 24 had not. Nine had taken a graduate level reading methods course; 28 had not. Eight had participated in some form of reading inservice programs; 29 had not. Seven had other background experiences related to reading; 30 had not.

Responses to question 8, "What must students do to understand what they read?" are as follows: (many teachers wrote several ideas)

a. Concentrate/focus on and think about reading 10
b. Relate reading to experiential background 8
c. Know how to read for main ideas 8
d. Have a large vocabulary 7
e. Read more 7
f. Have the ability to guess (anticipate) what the material is about 2
g. Use the dictionary 2
h. Discuss the material 2
i. Use decoding skills 2
j. Have a basic understanding of the language 1
k. Avoid reading word-for-word 1
l. Write about the material they read 1
m. Survey the material 1
n. Teachers should use relevant material 1
o. Teachers should know students' reading levels 1
p. Students should be taught how to read in earlier grades 1
q. Do not know 8

These are the responses to question 9, "What must students do to comprehend the meanings of the words they read?"

a. Use context clues 9
b. Use the dictionary 8
c. Have a good vocabulary 7
d. Relate reading to their experiences 5
e. Know word analysis skills 5
f. Read (more) 3
g. Use words in communication 3
h. Have vocabulary drills 1
i. Anticipate word meanings 1
j. Keep a vocabulary notebook 1
k. Think about their reading 1
l. Read for main ideas 1
m. Clear material to students' reading level 1
n. Do not skip small words in sentences 1
o. Do not know 8

These are the responses to question 10, "What skills are needed so your students can correctly pronounce words?"

a. Know word attack skills 22
   phonic analysis 15
   structural analysis 7
b. Use the pronunciation key 4
c. Know how to listen (hear) 4
d. Teachers should set a good example 4
e. Know spelling skills 2
f. Practice 2
g. Possess large sight vocabulary 2
h. Language experience 1
i. Have self-confidence 1
j. Have a good memory 1
k. Know the basic English skills 1
l. Visual discrimination 1
m. Sequencing 1
n. Smaller elementary classes 1
o. Teachers should know how to teach reading skills no matter what subject they teach 1
p. Do not know 10

The middle school had about 45 teachers and 35 of them submitted useable surveys. There were 19 female and 16 male respondents. They ranged in teaching experience from one year (N=5) to 26 years (N=1). Among them were four teachers with two years experience, one with five years, two with six years, etc., a comparatively young faculty. There were eight English teachers, seven mathematics teachers, four business teachers, as well as science, social studies, shop, physical education/health, etc., and teachers with dual appointments.

Nineteen of the respondents had taken an undergraduate reading methods course; 16 had not. Ten had taken a graduate level reading methods course; 25 had not. Eight had participated in some form of reading inservice programs; 27 had not.

Responses to question 8, "What must your students do to understand what they read?" are as follows: (many teachers wrote more than one response)

a. Know vocabulary and word meanings 25
b. Understand context 12
c. Concentrate on reading (think about it) 7
d. Decode, recognize, pronounce words 4
e. Have a desire (like to) read 4
f. Use their own background (schema) 4
g. Read to answer questions 3
h. Take notes 1
i. Know how to summarize 1
j. Have materials reinforced 1
k. Have a proper learning environment 1
l. Read at the level of the material 1
m. Anticipate content 1
n. Do not know 2

Responses to question 9, "What must students do to comprehend the meanings of the words they read?" are as follows:

a. Use context clues 12
b. Use the dictionary 10
c. Use word analysis/attack skills 7
d. Develop a larger reading vocabulary 6
e. Use personal background (schema) 4
f. Ask the teacher for help 3
g. Practice/Drill 2
h. Use picture symbols for the words 1
i. Work on study skills 1
j. Do not know 1

Responses to question 10, "What skills are needed so your students can correctly pronounce words?" are as follows:

a. Learn decoding skills: phonics/structural analysis 26
b. Learn to use the dictionary and glossary 7
c. Learn to listen effectively 3
d. Use context clues 3
e. Read more 2
f. Develop a large sight vocabulary 1
g. Read aloud 1
h. Take practice quizzes 1
i. Do not know 6

The data treated at this point in the study reveal that, for these middle school and high school teachers, there is at once concurrence and disparity in survey responses. From the limited sample it can be concluded that high school teachers believe students should think more about what they read, relate reading to their own experiential background and read for main ideas if they are to understand what they read. Middle school teachers overwhelmingly supported the skill of vocabulary knowledge/word meaning. They also favored the skill of understanding context and rated the act of thinking about what they read as a third choice.

The high school teachers thought that students should use context clues, dictionaries, and possess a good vocabulary in order to comprehend the meanings of words read. Middle school teachers also believed it necessary to use context clues, dictionaries, and have a good vocabulary but these teachers recommended word analysis/attack skills in response to this question.

As for the question about skills in word pronunciation, the high school teachers and middle school teachers noted word attack (decoding) skills as their first choice. Use of the dictionary/pronunciation key was a second recommendation and learning to listen better was their third choice. Both groups of teachers were most similar in responses to this question. They were least similar in their responses to the question about student understanding of what they read.

One must be cautious in drawing conclusions from these limited data, yet it would appear that a pattern may emerge if the trend continues and it seems to indicate the high school teachers are less aware of the reading skills their students need to understand what they read than are the middle school teachers.

As more data are gathered and treated, comparisons will be made in relation to teacher responses by subject area, number of years in teaching, and reading courses attended or taken. Once the process is completed, patterns of thinking are expected to be revealed that will lead to effective inservice program planning for all concerned.

Western Michigan University

READING RESOURCES CENTER

Secondary Teachers'
SURVEY
of
High School Students' Reading Skills

This survey is expected to help educators design effective inservice educational programs for secondary teachers. Please respond openly and candidly. All information is confidential. No one will know how you responded.

Also, if you do not know the answers, reply according (UK = unknown). A "don't know" is important because it also gives us usable information.

With the current focus on high school reading, it is crucial that we find out what secondary teachers know and do not know about reading skills. This information is vital because it will provide

1. focus/cotnent in READING METHODS COURSES for our students.
2. guideliens to EFFECTIVE INSERVICE PROGRAMS for secondary teachers.

Plese note that there are more questions on the back of this page. However, the survey takes only 7-8 minutes to complete.

1. Female ___ / Male ___

2. Years of teaching ___

3. Which subject(s) do you teach or have you taught in the last 3 years?

4. As an undergraduate student, did you take a reading method course (or courses)?

   Yes ___ / No ___. If yes, how many?

5. Have you had a graduate level reading methods course (or courses)?

   Yes ___ / No ___. If yes, how many?

6. Have you participated in inservice programs (conferences, workshops, etc.) on teaching reading in the content/subject areas during the past 3 years?

   Yes ____ / No ____. If yes, please list them.

7. Do you have other background experiences related to teaching reading?

   Yes ____ / No ____. If yes, please note --

8. What must students do to understand what they read?

9. What must students do to comprehend the meanings of the words they read?

10. What skills are needed so your students can correctly pronounce words?

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us gather information for this important study. This questionnaire was adapted from Leonard S. Braam and James E. Walker, "Subject Teachers' Awareness of Reading Skills," Journal of Reading, 16:608-611, May, 1973 and revised with the assistance of Cynthia Halderson. DAHF.

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Darwin Discovers the Teacher of Writing

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Writing and teaching writing require searching that is common to both behaviors. We search through the writings of Flannery O'Connor and Ken Macrorie and Peter Elbow and hundreds of other writers and teachers. We search in each other's offices and classrooms until students come by and then we're allowed to look into their minds. We attend conferences. And we carry with us, as we sit down at the typewriter or sit down to teach, most of the voices, at various volumes, we have heard, including all of our own voices. I've found that when I grow as a teacher I grow as a writer, and the reverse is true.

I've been listening to Peter Elbow, especially an essay titled "Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process" (1983). Elbow sees as conflicting mentalities two functions of a teacher: "we want to help more students learn more" (332) and "we want to increase our chances of success in serving knowledge, culture, and institutions" (333). We need to serve as an ally, a coach, to help students learn; and we are required to play the gatekeeper, to judge and to assign grades. Even though these functions are conflicting, one "leads naturally to the other; indeed, extremity in one enhances extremity in the other in a positive, reinforcing fashion" (334). In other words, if I set standards for me and for my students, standards that are tough, I am compelled to become "an extreme ally to students" (335).

Like Elbow, instead of running away from my role as gatekeeper, I let my students know the first day of class how I will keep the gate, and I let them know that because I have set high standards, I will work diligently with them to help them meet those standards. I open my classes with a full presentation of my policy statement, detailing my use of a contract system of grading. Students walk away from the first class knowing at least how much work they will be doing for a grade they want to see on their transcripts. Quantity is easily written out. Quality is not.

I need the contract system because I don't assign letter grades to any work produced during the semester. Often, grades signal the end, a message I do not want to send to writers in my composition courses. Barrett John Mandel, in his essay "Teaching Without Judging" (1973), argues that "judgment in the form of grades and measurement (against 'standards') does more to prevent education than to encourage it" (623). When he teaches literature courses, he grades "entirely, though flexibly, on a quantitative basis, rather than a qualitative one" (628), believing that in a "non-judgmental, unpunitive, encouraging context, students will want to work toward achieving self-styled and often very challenging goals" (629).

Professor Mandel's voice has got me nodding my head in agreement, especially when he assesses our world of grades that signal an end: "Perhaps the best idea would be to let students and teachers seek each other out as need dictates, so that only those who can work well together would agree to pursue a joint educational enterprise. But if such a Utopia is not to be expected soon, let us at least create an environment in which our students will be able to learn what they can without being the only ones penalized for what surely is as much our failures as theirs" (633).

I seem to be listening to two contrary voices: Elbow's extremes and Mandel's no extremes. What's a new teacher to do? One option is to bring in more voices.

Two professors at the University of Nebraska shared their method of grading writing with me several years ago. They had exchanged letter grades for an accept/not accept method. I have adopted a modified version of their method, keeping their central purpose: to help students see themselves as writers, to encourage them to ask questions (search) that writers ask. I give writers in my composition courses plenty of opportunities to think on paper and make choices, fail in some cases but succeed in most writings. The process of writing is most important. The product is important, of course, and sometimes it is thought of as most important because we can affix a grade to it, but if students see what work goes into making a successful product, they can take that with them as they leave our courses.

To help me develop a system to judge writing, I listen to Elbow and Mandel and Professors Narveson and Bergstrom and Ken Macrorie. In Uptaught (1970), Macrorie opens his chapter on grades with a challenge: "If the professor does his job perfectly, every student in the class should get an A" (89). I am fond of idealism and I want to be as much an idealist as I can, but I teach required freshman writing courses. In that real world, perfection is rare, especially perfection in grading writing.

When we judge writing we find ourselves forced into the role of mindreader: we must judge the writer's audience, her purpose, her voice. We evaluate her effectiveness in meeting the demands of a piece of writing. And we usually evaluate without the writer being present, sitting next to us answering questions. Do we always judge perfectly? Of course not. Even at our finest hour of grading, we are probably missing something, not seeing something in the writing that the

writer wants us to see. So we misjudge, maybe because we are drained from grading a stack of essays (so the phrase goes) or because too many students place too many demands on us, and we grade down. And maybe lose that student. We in the business of helping students read and think and write cannot afford to lose students, especially by way of artificial selection.

Do you remember a time or times when you were evaluated, when you did not agree with the evaluation, when you saw flaws in the evaluation because the evaluators were not as informed as they should have been? Teachers of writing are certainly being evaluated in a variety of ways, including our ability to write well. I imagine you have evaluated or are evaluating my ability to write well. You might be asking yourself what my title, "Darwin Discovers the Teacher of Writing," has to do with my text. Maybe you're arguing that my teaching system places too much emphasis on quantity and not enough on quality.

First we must decide what we grade. Some teachers of writing take the grammar road, believing it to be objective (clearly it is not), perhaps manufacturing elaborate point systems to grade students down for so many misspellings, so many sentence fragments (whether or not they work in the text), so many punctuation inconsistencies. Some teachers assign one grade for "content" and another for "mechanics." Most of us look for "good writing," and we hope we see it when it appears on our desks.

In my writing courses, I want to help students see themselves as writers, not student writers, not potential writers. I want them to see that in the end, they alone will struggle with their ideas and with the language and strategies to communicate those ideas, that they can do it--without the aid or torture of English teachers. As writers, their work is judged in my courses as either accepted or not accepted.

I want to focus on my treatment of what I call manuscripts. (I am now trying to avoid calling writings papers or essays or themes or compositions. Anything to help people see themselves as writers. Writers do write essays, but my students are asked to write in whatever form gets the job done.) I resist listing for my students specifics about quality, about what I accept. I remain vague in criteria, thinking that even as vague as the criteria are, students would write with the criteria in mind as if they were ingredients to a secret formula, the teacher's formula, that they would write for the grade only and not for the learning. But I will list them for us: make the writing work; use whatever you need to make it work; make it worthy of being read--by you and by others, preferably a knowable audience; look at what you've written, and look again, and again.

For each manuscript I assign a due date and a deadline date. Due dates fall two to four weeks before deadline dates and are targets for students to work toward in producing initial drafts or notes. The first time I see a draft, I read without a pen in hand, focusing on what the writer is saying to her audience. I offer encouraging comments after I have read the draft, and if necessary I steer the writer away from major problems with the text (structure, plot, voice, etc.). With very few exceptions I am able to return these manuscripts to the writers the next time I see them (sometimes two hours later in my office). And the writers do not cringe: they are not threatened with a B when they wanted or needed an A, a D when they would have settled for a C-. Instead they realize that my comments and questions are intended to help them strengthen the manuscript, and that is what they set off to do.

The next time I see the manuscripts, some completely changed from the initial draft, some only slightly altered, I focus my comments and questions on the most pressing need or needs arising from the text. Sometimes that requires more encouragement and more steering, but most times I ask the writer questions about more specific needs of the text. If the manuscript is sound, I begin work on the next stage of writing: I ask questions concerning editing matters.

Now this cycling and reviewing and looking again at writing is quite frustrating for many writers. I repeat to them at times that I face the same frustration when I write and review my writing and try again. This appeases some. We end up with some messy manuscripts, and I say again and again that I like messy, that I want them to learn to appreciate the necessary art of reseeing their writing, of experimenting with their thoughts and the language to produce a better product, even if it is not a final product. Some students complain about working on a manuscript after they've submitted it, but after a couple of manuscripts have been accepted, most students move away from "this is how I wrote it and I don't need to change a thing" thinking and toward "now what can I do with this writing to improve it?"

The accept/not accept method of grading gives me and students more control. Students have more control over their writing (because they are not trying to fit it into the teacher's secret formula), and they have more control over their final grade. My control can vary for each writer according to the needs and performance of each writer and according to my energies and needs. For some writers, those who need no motivation to work hard on their writing, I'm allowed to simply enjoy their work and from time to time offer help. For others, I need to work harder motivating them to better work, often unteaching them away from what Macrorie calls Engfish: perfect mechanics but not a damn

thing of any importance or freshness appearing in the writing.

So what I accept cannot be translated into "A work" or "B work." I would characterize what I accept as in a range from motivated work to inspired work, remembering always that work in writing involves the process, the product, and some kind of intuitive wholeness of the writing.

When we grade, we offer encouragement, then we look for weaknesses in the writing and usually grade down for some or all of those weaknesses. We justify the grade we affix to the product by focusing on the weaknesses. Of course I realize that when I accept or not accept a manuscript I am grading, but when I am not required to justify a grade of A, B, C, D or F or the many in-between grades, I don't read looking down. I read wondering better, best, and a million other coaching things.

The duty of justifying a letter grade on a manuscript causes me, and probably a lot of teachers, to cringe and at times to try to avoid even reading the work of my students. When I have used letter grades during the semester, I took up to a week to return students' work, more time at the end of the semester, not because I was too busy--I wasn't. But because I could not make myself do it. And we hear complaints throughout the semester: I've got another stack of essays to grade. Oh God.

Now I return work the next time I see my students. Often students want to see their work sooner, so they come to my office to get it: an example of how the student accepts the responsibility for his work. They don't write, give it to me, hope for an A or a B or even a D, and say now you work on this, Rob: you edit it, you improve it, you take care of it; I'm finished with it.

This system of holding before my students a huge carrot called a final course grade and working at writing from many different angles during a two to four week period is not perfect (sorry, Professor Macrorie). Some students, a very few, tell me rather bluntly that the system sucks. But most students appreciate the freedom to experiment without punishment, to view writing as learning, to aim for a grade they want to see on their transcripts after so many years of seeing grades that reflect their skill at some element of writing like spelling or how well they support a thesis or even if they can define a thesis.

I certainly don't offer a contract system or an accept/not accept grading method as the cure for the common composition cold, but I hope that teachers of writing don't close their debate about judging writing too quickly. My best hope for this essay is that the voices I have listened to may be some of the many heard by teachers and especially new teachers. But when it comes time to plan for Monday's class or to determine writing criteria or to structure a course or judge a student's writing, in the end the last voice we hear is our own. Can our students be so different? Should they be?

What I try to do in my teaching is to shift the responsibility for work, for writing well, to the students, to encourage in any way possible that responsibility, and to guide students to guide themselves, to listen to their own voices.

Now, before you finalize your weighing of the strengths and weaknesses of my thinking and my writing, before your voice rises above all others, I want to share with you the thinking and writing of five students as they grade themselves and me and as they evaluate their work and my work when we worked together. These are excerpts, the first four written as student evaluations of the instructor--me--the last day of class in May 1986:

"I do feel proud of myself for making it through even with a C. Keep up the good work."

"Rough class. Finally I had to actually do work, shocking. The equivalent to Calc II taught by the head of the department."

"Even though I became frustrated, anxious, and felt as though I was overworked, I must admit that I have never been so challenged to do well."

"I started the semester as a student that had something published in a national magazine, but I really feel that I can now call myself a writer (even if I can't spell worth a crap!)."

The fifth excerpt is from a reaction to our anthology of literature written the third week of this semester:

"I feel my writings aren't very good because I'm not very dynamic in my writing and the only time my pen has written something noteworthy is because someone else has borrowed my pen."

Well, perhaps someone has given her a new definition of dynamic and noteworthy. Earlier in this reaction, she writes:

"It seems that either my writing has miraculously improved or the tension of a comp. class has been relieved somewhat by the open-mindedness and genuine effort to find what I'm really trying to say."

Okay. Red pens out and ready. Time to grade Wilborn's argument.

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WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
UTILIZING CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMOR TO TEACH CRITICAL READING SKILLS

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The elementary student encounters humorous literature at all grade levels. Children's books and instructional reading materials contain a variety of humorous selections including cartoons, jokes, puns, poetry, riddles and stories. The concepts reflected in such writings are expressions of writers at different times in the history of human kind, though the majority of the selections found in basal readers are the products of contemporary thinkers.

Gertrude Williams includes the appreciation of humor on a list of thirty-three critical reading skills in her article "Provisions for Critical Reading in Basal Readers." A close look at the content of humorous writings for children reveals specific critical reading skills that are needed by the reader to understand the humor. Predicting outcomes, judging the reasonableness in writings, identifying elements of style of writing, et al, are a few examples of critical reading skills required to read humorous writings with comprehension.

Utilizing humorous content to teach critical reading skills might not only accomplish learning the skills but it may be possible to create a 'sense' of humor within the learner. 'Sense' of humor in this context means the recognition of those elements contained in humorous writings that create the conditions which produce laughter and are funny.

The content of this article is designed to provide teachers with suggestions for teaching critical reading skills utilizing the content of humorous literature.

Accomplishing the task requires that the teacher select appropriate humorous selections, analyze them to identify their critical reading skill content, and provide instruction which aids students in making such identifications when needed.

The instructional procedures include teacher and student questioning to obtain an accurate analysis by utilizing facts, basic ideas, principles and concepts related to understanding the humor and/or to appreciate humorous writing.

The elementary teacher's use of humorous writings to teach critical reading skills is viewed by the writer as a means for introducing a critical reading skill, providing practice in understanding the critical reading skill, or as reinforcement of a known skill through a different medium.

This investigation of the critical reading skills needed for understanding varied selections from humorous children's literature is the outgrowth of the notion that if appreciating humor is a critical reading skill (Williams, 1959) the development of students' understanding of various kinds of humor through an analysis of humorous selections might be an effective strategy for teaching and learning many of the critical reading skills.

Examples of cartoons and comic strips, puns, and riddles are presented with the identification of critical reading skills as they directly relate to the content and theme of specific humorous selections.

Humor is defined as being any verbal or nonverbal response to a particular situation that is perceived by the listener or reader as being funny. Incongruity, surprise, double meaning, comical writings and sayings, etc. are viewed as the stimulating factors that produce humorous situations.

A sense of humor is defined as possessing insight into the nature of comical situations, sayings and writings, and responding to them as being funny.

A critical reader "approaches the material with an inquiring and analytical attitude" (Spache & Spache, 1977) and the reader analyzes and extends the author's meaning beyond the printed page. (Cheek & Cheek, 1984). Statements and questions appearing in humorous writings will make these dual demands on the reader.

The list of 33 critical reading skills identified by Gertrude Williams in her article entitled "Provisions for Critical Reading in Basal Readers" follows:

*CRITICAL READING SKILLS
(Gertrude Williams)

__ A. *Anticipating outcomes
__ B. *Appreciating humor, plot
__ C. *Classifying ideas
__ D. *Comparing and contrasting
__ E. Critical thinking
__ F. *Distinguishing fact and fancy
__ G. *Distinguishing fact and opinion
__ H. *Drawing conclusions
__ I. *Establishing cause and effect
__ J. *Establishing sequence
__ K. Evaluating author's attitude
__ L. *Evaluating and reacting to ideas in the light of the author's purpose
__ M. Evaluating and solving problems
__ N. Evaluating summaries
__ O. *Finding information to prove or disprove a statement
__ P. Forming an opinion
__ Q. *Forming sensory impressions
__ R. *Generalizing
__ S. Identifying elements of style
__ T. *Identifying and evaluating character traits
__ U. Interpreting figurative and idiomatic language
__ V. *Interpreting ideas, implied, not stated
__ W. *Judging author's statements
__ X. *Judging reasonableness and accuracy
__ Y. *Making inferences
__ Z. *Making judgments

__ a. *Perceiving relationships
__ b. *Predicting outcomes
__ c. *Reacting to mood or tone
__ d. *Recognizing emotional reactions and motives
__ e. *Recognizing story problems and plot structure
__ f. *Relating story experiences to persona experiences
__ g. *Research

Prerequisites to learning to read critically from instruction which analyzes humorous writings and drawings emphasize the learner's developed skills and abilities. Therefore,

the learner should

1. have adequate listening and speaking skills.
2. be skillful at reading pictures.
3. possess the ability to understand analogous situations occurring in narrative reading materials.
4. have an interest in words and their meanings.
5. be able to understand metaphors and similies.
6. understand narrative reading materials at the literal and inferential levels for the appropriate developmental level.

Three examples of the proposed manner of teaching follow accompanied by suggestions for eliciting learner responses which stimulate the learning of critical reading skills.

Cartoons and Comic Strips

The impact of cartoons and the comics on the youth living in America is strongly felt in the schools. Comics are an accepted part of daily living and are often reproduced in the print materials developed for children.

Dr. George Spache recommends that children should learn to evaluate the comics to determine authenticity, accuracy, and literacy merit of presentation. (Spache, 1973). I should like to suggest that an analysis of the content of the cartoons and comics will help students comprehend these brief, concise formats of communication.

An analysis of comic strips to illustrate various critical reading skills should help students understand the humorous content and enhance their sense of humor.

Teaching the difference between the kinds of cartoon drawings and their purposes helps students note the succinct statements that accompany a single drawing or a series of pictures when cartoons appear in a sequence such as in comic strips. The development of ideas expressed in a series of pictures requires reading from left-to-right, the application of sequential thought and understanding of the logic of the language and the graphics. An understanding of symbolism which is used to depict dialogue, sound, motion, thoughts, surprise and freight is paramount.

A reader learns that the information in comic strips is cumulative and often unpredictable in these circumstances. Providing opportunities for elementary students to use the critical reading skill of predicting outcomes utilizing cartoons is suggested.

Other critical reading skills which may be taught emphasizing the written and graphic content of cartoons are:

1. Using imagination
2. Sensing relationships between people
3. Analyzing characters
4. Recognizing motives
5. Recognizing emotional reactions

Children's continuous study of words may be enhanced through enjoying puns. Puns are defined as being "a play on words, sometimes on different senses of the same word and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words." (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1978, p. 1059). The teacher directs the learner's attention to the depth of the inferred meaning found in puns. Three critical reading skills are taught. An example from Red Skelton's Gertrude and Heathcliffe follows:

Gertrude: I can't find that egg I produced this morning.

Heathcliffe: Well, you probably mislaid it.

Critical reading skills	Content and theme
1. Making inferences	1. Anticipate Heathcliffe's answer based upon what you know about birds and eggs.
2. Perceiving relationships	2. What is the key word in Gertrude's statement? What synonym or other word means the same as the key word as it relates to birds? What derivative of the word produces the pun?
3. Appreciating humor	3. Word play is one characteristic of humor which can produce laughter.

"WHAT'S SO FUNNY?"

Description of the teacher's procedures:

The teacher should:

1. Select several different examples of humorous writings and illustrations, such as cartoons, jokes, prose, poetry, puns, and riddles written at an appropriate reading level for the students.

2. Select a comprehensive list of critical reading skills such as the list developed by Gertrude Williams.

3. Read each selection to identify the key passages needed for comprehending the humor and analyze the critical reading skills needed to understand and appreciate the humorous content.

4. Select the appropriate critical reading skills needed to understand the writing by using the comprehensive list of critical reading skills as guidelines. Develop appropriate questions designed to elicit the responses needed by a reader to understand and appreciate the humorous writing.

5. Place the printed portion of the humorous selection that illustrates each listed critical reading skill next to the identified key words, phrases and/or sentences which can elicit a humorous response from the reader.

6. Develop discussion questions about each humorous selection designed to elicit appropriate responses for students that did not see the humor when the passage was read initially.

7. Select other comprehension clues which may be given to students when they read humorous literature orally. The recall of personal events, giving an antonym for a key word, calling attention to the context, and setting are but a few suggestions.

8. Provide instructional time for students to read and enjoy the selected humorous literature.

9. Initiate any needed instruction to remediate critical reading skill development.

10. Introduce more subtle humorous writings as students become more proficient in the understanding and use of critical reading skills.

11. Develop discussion questions designed to enrich and extend students' understanding of various kinds of humor.

The analysis of the content is initiated by the teacher by calling student's attention to the various elements listed through questioning and discussion.

Riddles

An interest in and an enjoyment of riddles has been sustained over the centuries. Bennett Cerf reported that riddles appeared in the Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature in 1511. (Cerf, 1962).

The practice of riddling belongs to adults and children. A search of the literature reveals that "traditional questions with unexpected answers" (Brunvand, 1968) have been found among the native cultures of all peoples since before the Middle Ages. (Brunvand, 1968).

Examples of the riddles in elementary school literature are descriptive of the "true riddle" which is a comparison between the unstated answer and something else that is described in the question. (Brunvand, 1968). A true riddle taken from Bennett Cerf's book Riddle-De-Dee follows:

Question: Why is your nose in the middle of your face?

Answer: Because it is the scenter. (Cerf, 1962).

The analysis of the content of this riddle might look like this:

Critical Reading Skills	Riddle format and content
1. Recognizing homonyms	1. center, scenter
2. Using context clues	2. deciding upon the key word in the question
3. Analyzing while reading	3. What is the function of a person's nose? and where is the nose located?

Additional reading skills which can be applied to understanding riddles are:

1. Recognizing antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms
2. Recognizing sequence
3. Making generalizations and drawing conclusions
4. Using context clues
5. Analyzing and categorizing while reading

(Buffie and Jenkins, 1971)

Additional activities

The enrichment and extension of the learning initiated through children's involvement with analytic activities is suggested.

Cartoons and comic strips

1. Add a new character to the student's favorite comic strip. Ask the student to explain the new character's role in adding to the humorous content.

2. Write or tell about the type of person a comic strip character would be if he/she were a person living in your neighborhood.

3. Draw a caricature of a favorite character in a basal reader story. An explanation of the drawing may be given by the artist orally or in writing.

Punning

1. Develop two line cloze exercises omitting the words that
   a. play on different senses of the same word
   b. play on the similar sense or the sound of different words.
2. Write original two line poems using puns.
3. Read about the history of punning.

Riddles

1. Develop riddles about the events in a story the students have previously read. Sharing of riddles may be done by students guessing each other's riddles.
2. Students can develop original riddles and have them solved by a friend.
3. Discuss the multiple meanings of the word riddle and use the word in proper context.

Summary

This article has developed a framework of ideas for the utilization of humorous literature to teach critical reading skills. Humorous writings provide a wealth of opportunities for readers to develop skills such as perceiving relationships, establishing sequence and classifying ideas. Methodology involves using cartoons, comic strips, puns and riddles. Questioning and discussion follow the analysis of literature. Students' interests and skill development are enhanced when they understand what they are reading. With this method they can develop these skills and enjoy the learning experiences.

Cunning punning and clever cartooning may be helpful to your students critical reading.

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THE LANGUAGE OF CHILDREN'S ORAL AND WRITTEN STORIES

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Recent years have evidenced a shift in attitude about language--its role, its function, and its relationship to literacy in school settings. Pooley (1948) noted more than thirty years ago that the common classroom situation is one where the teacher dominates and does most of the talking. More recent studies of classroom interaction still indicate that interaction reflects teacher control of learning (Dillon-Searle, 1981; Cooper, 1979). Moreover, teacher talk tends to be familiar and low-frequency words are rare in both students' and teachers' talk (Calfee & Drum, 1986). Whether through listening, talking, or reading, or writing, language is the means by which most learning in school is channelled. Potentially language is both an asset and a liability in the learning process.

As a result of shifts in attitude about language and its role and function in school, a renewed interest in the relationships between oral and written language has emerged. Although Malinowski's (1923/1935) original concept of context dependence has been the traditional distinction between spoken and written texts, researchers within the past two decades have been studying the writings of children to further document the relationships. These studies have focused primarily on sentence and syntactic complexity (Strickland, 1962; Hunt, 1965; O'Donnell, 1974; Loban, 1976).

Written discourse has been characterized as more complex, integrated and detached, or explicit (Syder & Pawley, 1976; Chafe, 1981; Hildyard & Olson, 1978). Investigators typcially attribute high levels of complexity, integration and detachment, or explicitness in written discourse to the greater frequencies of subordinate clauses, relative clauses, participial phrases, appositive phrases, and passive verb-constructions that exist in writing (Chafe, 1981; Hildyard & Olson, 1978; Kroll, 1977; Loban, 1976; Syder & Pawley, 1976).

Oral discourse, on the other hand, has been characterized as more coordinated, involved, or implicit (Chafe, 1981; Hildyard & Olson, 1978; Kay, 1977). Investigators attribute high levels of coordination, involvement or implicitness to the greater frequencies of coordinated conjunctions and active verb constructions that exist in this mode (Chafe; 1981; Kroll, 1977; Loban, 1976; Syder & Pawley, 1976).

While these investigators cited differences between oral and written language, Cambourne (1981) cited characteristics which are similar for both written and oral language in that both obviously employ the same basic rules of grammar and vocabulary; both obviously are concerned with communication; both are used in a wide variety of everyday activities; and both are taken for granted by those who use them.

Moreover, researchers differ in their beliefs for reasons for language mode sensitivity. King and Rentel (1979) proposed that written language is much more than talk written down, for it is expected to convey meaning on its own without the supportive context of the author or the situation and events that generated the message. Smith (1977) questioned whether written langauge skills are unique even though some different skills are needed. He observed that certain modes of spoken language are just as abstract and as related to context as those of written language. Hence, a child must learn conventions for both written and oral language. Halliday (1980) believed that oral language is syntactically complex, but conceptually not very dense; whereas written language is conceptually dense and syntactically elegant. Perera (1984) proposed that writing requires one individual to produce a sustained and well organized piece of language as opposed to most functional oral language that is not well organized.

Some investigators have indicated that children's writings are marked by many holdovers from speech (Graves, 1982; Collins & Michaels, 1980; Meier & Carden, 1982). They have suggested that children have a system of order that is imposed on writing during a transition from speech to print. Recently some educators have cautioned about the over emphasis of writing as an aspect of thinking and the dangers in giving writing too central of a role in teaching and dangers in urging teachers to emphasize writing in all school subjects. Over emphasizing writing might impede the development of nonverbal abilities (Sternberg, 1983; Glatthorn, 1985).

Along with the interest in language, the past decade has seen a rise in interest of children's generation of stories. Such studies reflect a growing emphasis on text organization and text processing as important variables in instructional formats.

The present research was undertaken to determine whether the linguistic and narrative knowledge and usage in

children's written narratives that occur at the macro and micro level are similar to those observed by Ice (1986) in children's oral narratives. In her study of macro and micro story elements, the students were adding more elements to their stories rather than replacing old elements with new ones. Moreover macrostructures were malleable, whereas microstructures were stable. That is, the children's preferences for story source, characters, and plots reflected relationships between constraints that exist in each setting and language users as well as students' ability to work with and around such constraints. These preferences also reflected learned social and/or educational constraints as well as students' cognitive problem solving abilities to handle multiple demands and causality.

A further rationale for this study was to determine whether the changes in story macro and micro structures observed in the longitudinal study was an artifact of the research design. Both studies analyzed children's generation of stories according to the story elements (1) sources of their stories, (2) story characters, (3) story plot, (4) story conventions, (5) connectors between clauses, and (6) minimal terminal units (Hunt, 1965). An additional story element type-token ratio, the number of times a particular linguistic item occurs in a text in relation to the linguistic class to which it belongs, was addressed in this study. For both studies story macrostructures referred to the sources of stories, the overall plot organization, and the number and kinds of characters. Story microstructures refered to the use of story conventions, clausal connections, T-units, and type-token ratios.

Method

Subjects

The nine students who participated in this study attend schools in three separate school districts in Illinois, Missouri, and Colorado. All students rated above average in reading achievement and performance throughout their formal education. Two students were fourth graders, four students were fifth graders, two students were seventh graders, and one student was a ninth grader. All students volunteered to participate in the study.

Procedures

At one setting the students were first asked to "Tell me a story" which was audio tape recorded as well as written down by the researcher. After completion of this task, the students were then requested to "Write me a story" which was written in the presence of the researcher. Both stories were subsequently transcribed and analyzed according to the seven story elements. No time limit was imposed nor were prompts and/or probes of any type provided.

Analysis of the elements consisted of examining the number and kinds of each story element in order to determine the similarities and differences between the oral and written language conventions in the student generated stories. Frequency counts were prepared for each of the story elements and then grouped into frequency distributions for summarization. Finally, frequency percentages were provided to accommodate for story length differences.

Results

Sources of stories. For both language modes students generated stories from all the sources--actual experiences, versions of a known story, created stories, or a combination of sources for a single text (see Table 1).

Character type. More characters were found in their oral stories than in their written stories. Students tended to use primarily people for characters for both language modes (see Table 2).

Story plot. Stories were generated for each kind of story plot. Embedded plots were the least common plot (see Table 3).

Story conventions. In this study the children's use of story openings appeared to be similar for both their oral and written stories, whereas their use of endings varied slightly. Terminating the story appeared to be the most common approach for ending stories for both language modes. No fairy tale endings were found in their written stories. Story tense indicated slight differences. No mixed tenses were found in their written stories; no present/future tenses were found in their oral stories (see Table 4).

Clausal connectors. Of the clausal connectors, and as a filler, and then, and and so were found only in their oral stories. Except for a greater frequency of and between sentences in their oral stories, the percentages were relatively comparable for the remaining connectors (see Table 5).

T-units. Their written stories contained more simple sentences even though these stories were shorter in length. Consequently, a fewer number of subordinated sentences were found in their written stories (see Table 6).

Type-token ratios. The ratios for type-tokens were greater for their

written stories than for their oral stories as the students generally used a wider variety of words in their written stories (see Table 7).

Discussion

This preliminary study of language mode sensitivity of effective readers' oral and written stories should be regarded as tentative in view of the limitations. In spite of the limitations, the importance of this study lies in the observation that language mode sensitivity in children's narratives at these age levels is apparently reflected in the microstructures. This sensitivity appears at the morphological level in their written stories rather than the syntactic, phonetic, or semantic levels. Apparently these children include a wider variety of words in their written stories than their oral stories. Even though a wider variety of words appear in the written stories, these words are commonly found in children's oral vocabularies (see Table 8). Such an observation would tend to suggest that a distinction between oral and written vocabularies may be superfluous. It may well be that the distinction is only between receptive and expressive language. Thus, children may need a writing process in order to achieve linguistic sophistication. In addition such a process may be vital for moving words from their receptive vocabulary to their expressive vocabulary.

Finally, the almost exclusive use of and as a filler, and then, and so, and and between sentences in their oral stories suggests that these children differentiate between oral and written texts when using these devices. Such an observation tends to suggest that these items are habitual transitional oral devices that children use for coherence.

Implications

Along with the need for further research for significance, should be enlargement of the population to include average students and below average students in reading achievement. Obviously, a closer examination of the relationships of oral and written language under identical conditions prior to revision is needed for documenting the impact of reading, storytelling, and a story writing process on children's narratives. Moreover, a closer inspection of the role of pauses in reading and writing may reveal furthur insights into text processing.

The preliminary findings of this study have several implications for educators. First, the findings suggest that students need variety in their reading and writing programs. Clearly, children need to hear and read narratives as language sources that develop understandings of language and texts other than their own.

This study also indicates that a story writing process may assist in moving vocabulary from receptive to expressive language as well as developing elaborated word knowledge. Thus educators must recognize the importance of providing balanced reading and writing programs that develop all the story components along with students' verbal and nonverbal story telling abilities.

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Tables

Table 1
Frequencies and percentages of story sources

	Oral Frequency	Percent
Actual experiences	0	0
Familiar stories	3	33
Novel stories	4	45
Combined sources	2	22
Total	9	100

	Written Frequency	Percent
Actual experiences	1	12
Familiar stories	3	33
Novel stories	3	33
Combined sources	2	22
Total	9	100

Table 2
Frequencies and percentages of character type

	Oral Frequency	Percent
People	38	65
Animals	5	09
Other creations	15	26
Total	58	100

	Written Frequency	Percent
People	26	90
Animals	1	03
Other creations	2	07
Total	29	100

Table 3
Frequencies and percentages of story plot

	Oral Frequency	Percent
Temporal sequence	2	22
Mixed temporal and/or causal	6	67
Embedded	1	11
Total	9	100

	Written Frequency	Percent
Temporal sequence	4	45
Mixed temporal and causal	2	22
Embedded	3	33
Total	9	100

Table 4
Frequencies and percentages of story conventions

	Oral Frequency	Percent
Opening		
Fairy tale	3	33
Immediate	4	45
Setting	2	22
Ending		
Termination	5	56
Fairy tale	3	33
Closing	1	11
Tense		
Mixed	2	22
Past	6	67
Episodic	1	11
Present/future	0	0

	Written Frequency	Percent
Opening		
Fairy tale	3	33
Immediate	5	56
Setting	1	11
Ending		
Termination	7	78
Fairy tale	0	0
Closing	2	22
Tense		
Mixed	0	0
Past	6	67
Episodic	2	22
Present/future	1	11

Table 5
Frequencies and percentages of clausal connections

	Oral Frequency	Percent
And (filler)	14	02
Pauses	183	27
And (S+S)	130	19
And (W+W)	83	12
Or (W+W)	2	0
And then	17	02
And so	8	01
Subordinating conjunctions	38	06
Causal	45	07
Conditional	5	01
Disjunctive	31	05
Temporal	39	06
Relative pronouns	83	12
Total	678	100

	Written Frequency	Percent
And (filler)		
Pauses	145	54
And (S+S)	17	6
And (W+W)	28	11
or (W+W)	1	0
And then		
And so		
Subordinating conjunctions	21	8
Causal	13	5
Conditional	5	2
Disjunctive	8	3
Temporal	6	2
Relative pronouns	24	9
Total	143	100

Table 6
Frequencies and percentages of T-units

	Oral Frequency	Percent
Simple sentence	280	63
Compound elements	45	10
Main clause & one subordinate	101	22
Main clause & multiple subordinates	22	5
Total	449	100

	Written Frequency	Percent
Simple sentence	163	73
Compound elements	14	06
Main clause & one subordinate	41	18
Main clause & multiple subordinates	6	3
Total	224	100

Table 7
Frequencies of words and type token ratios

	Oral Frequency	Written Frequency
No. different word roots	1197	923
Total no. words	3064	1724
Type token ratio	.39	.54

Table 8
Total word frequencies of one written and oral text

Written									
A	4	EVE	2	WANT	1	THEY	1		
AFTER	1	EVEN	1	WE	3	THE	1		
ALL	2	EXCITED	1	WHEN	1	THINGS	1		
AND	4	FIGURE	1	WHY	1	THIS	1		
ANY	1	FINALLY	2	OF	6	TIME	1		
ATE	1	FINISHED	1	OPEN	2	TO	5		
BAD	1	FOR	1	OR	1	TODAY	1		
BE	1	FORGOT	1	OTHER	1	TOMORROW	1		
BECAUSE	1	FUNNY	1	OUT	1	TONIGHT	1		
BREAKFAST	1	GET	1	PRESENTS	2	TOO	1		
BUILDED	1	GOING	2	SAVE	1	TRY	1		
CAME	2	GOT	1	SEEMED	1	UNUSUAL	1		
CHRISTMAS	3	HAVE	1	SOMEHOW	1	UP	1		
CLOTHES	1	I	10	SO	1	WAIT	1		
COULD	1	IF	6	SOME	3	WAS	1		
DIDN'T	2	JUST	1	TAPE	1	WHAT	2		
DAY	6	LAMP	1	TEETH	1				
DID	1	LIKE	1	TELL	1				
DIFFERENT	2	LONG	1	THAT	3				
DRESSED	1	LOT	1	THATS	1				
Oral									
A	2	FOUND	1	ME	1	SEE	1		
ALAN	1	FRIEND	1	MINE	1	SHE	8		
ALL	1	GIVE	1	MONEY	1	SHOULD	1		
AND	16	GOING	1	MY	8	SO	6		
ANY	2	GOT	1	NEXT	2	STUFF	1		
ANYWAY	1	HAD	3	NO	1	TEACH	1		
BECAUSE	2	HAMMERSMITH	1	OF	1	THAT	1		
BE	1	HER	1	ON	5	THE	12		
BOAT	3	HOME	1	ONE	1	THEN	1		
BUT	1	HOMEWORK	1	COPIES	1	THERE	1		
CARS	1	I	1	OUT	1	THOUGHT	1		
CHILDREN'S	2	IF	1	OUTSIDE	1	TIME	1		
CAL	1	IN	5	OVER	1	TO	1		
DID	3	INBETWEEN	1	PAPER	1	UNDER	1		
DO	1	IT	11	PLACE	1	US	1		
DRESSED	1	LIKE	3	PROBABLY	1	WAS	5		
DR ROSS	1	LOOK	2	REPORT	1	WASN'T	1		
FINALLY	1	LOOKED	1	RIDE	1	WATER	1		
A	2	LOT	1	ROOM	1	WE	1		
EVERYONE	1	MAYBE	1	SAID	3	WELL	1		
FOUR	1	MEN	1	WITH	1	WHOLE	1		